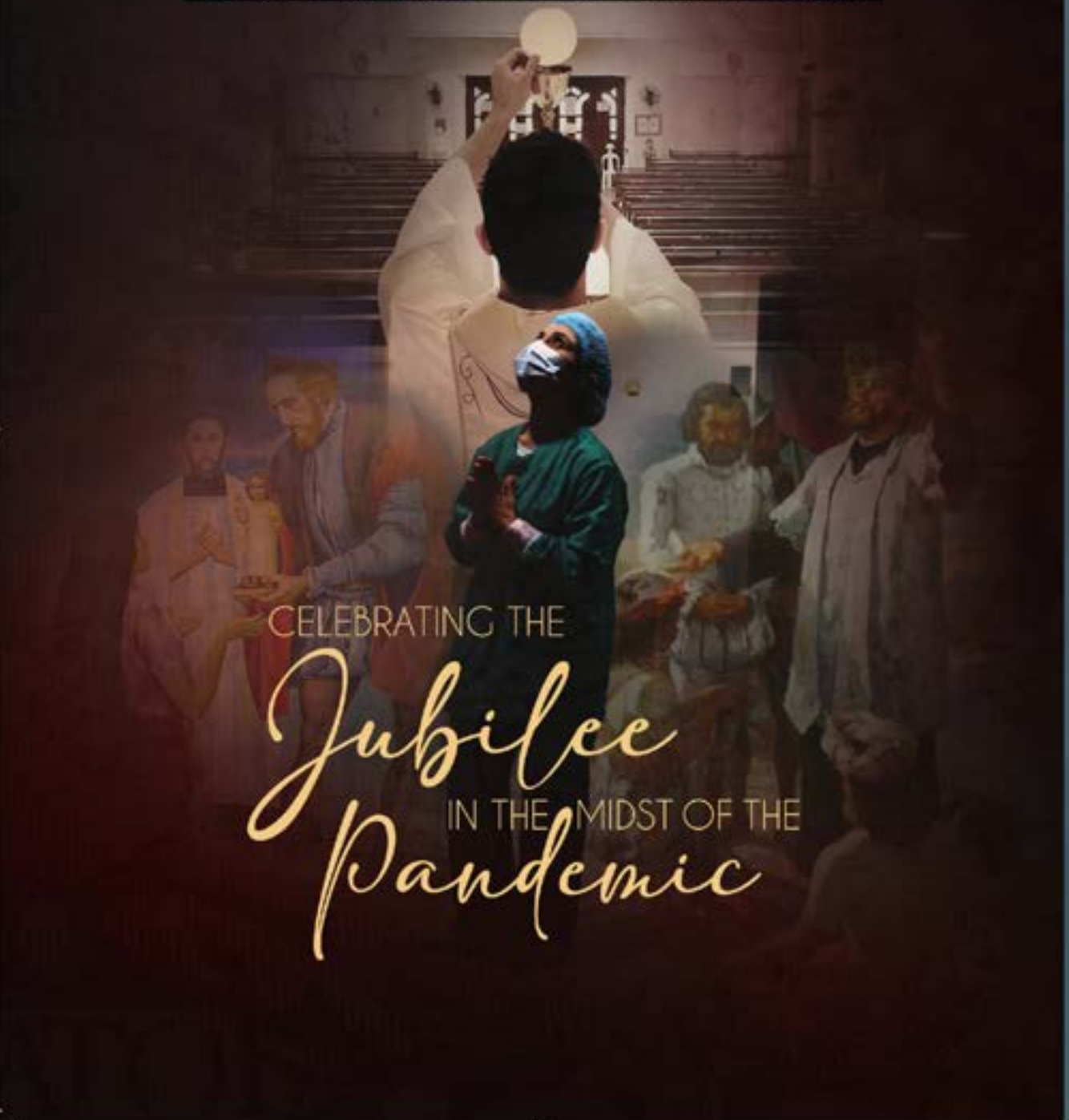
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TINIG LOYOLA

A STUDENT PUBLICATION OF THE LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY



CELEBRATING THE *Jubilee* IN THE MIDST OF THE *Pandemic*

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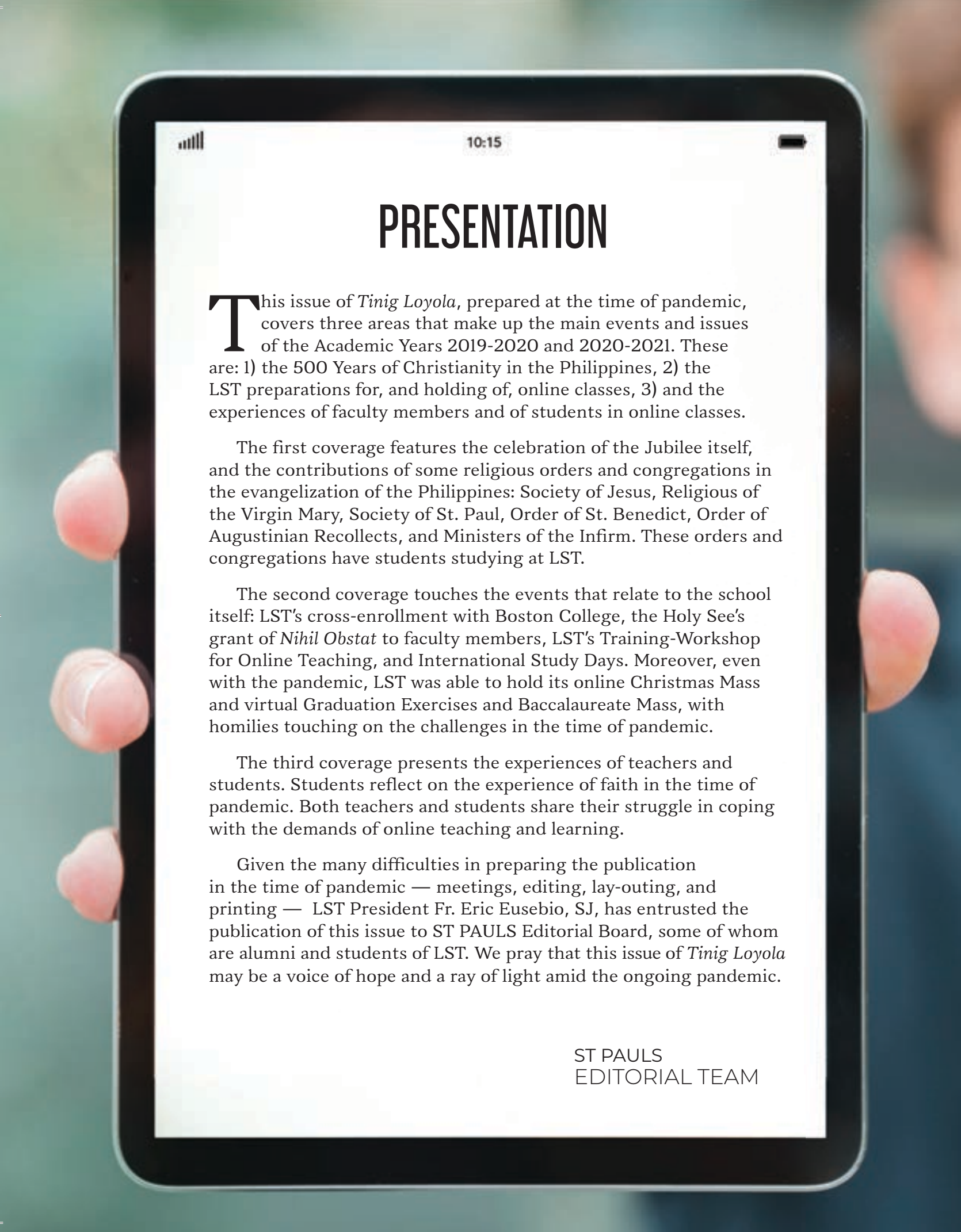
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PRESENTATION

This issue of *Tinig Loyola*, prepared at the time of pandemic, covers three areas that make up the main events and issues of the Academic Years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. These are: 1) the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines, 2) the LST preparations for, and holding of, online classes, 3) and the experiences of faculty members and of students in online classes.

The first coverage features the celebration of the Jubilee itself, and the contributions of some religious orders and congregations in the evangelization of the Philippines: Society of Jesus, Religious of the Virgin Mary, Society of St. Paul, Order of St. Benedict, Order of Augustinian Recollects, and Ministers of the Infirm. These orders and congregations have students studying at LST.

The second coverage touches the events that relate to the school itself: LST's cross-enrollment with Boston College, the Holy See's grant of *Nihil Obstat* to faculty members, LST's Training-Workshop for Online Teaching, and International Study Days. Moreover, even with the pandemic, LST was able to hold its online Christmas Mass and virtual Graduation Exercises and Baccalaureate Mass, with homilies touching on the challenges in the time of pandemic.

The third coverage presents the experiences of teachers and students. Students reflect on the experience of faith in the time of pandemic. Both teachers and students share their struggle in coping with the demands of online teaching and learning.

Given the many difficulties in preparing the publication in the time of pandemic — meetings, editing, lay-outing, and printing — LST President Fr. Eric Eusebio, SJ, has entrusted the publication of this issue to ST PAULS Editorial Board, some of whom are alumni and students of LST. We pray that this issue of *Tinig Loyola* may be a voice of hope and a ray of light amid the ongoing pandemic.

ST PAULS
EDITORIAL TEAM

CELEBRATING 500



YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

On September 20, 1519, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer in the service of the King of Spain, left Spain in command of five ships. He believed that he could reach the Spice Islands by sailing west. Reaching the tip of the South American continent, the expedition crossed the vast Pacific Ocean and on March 16, 1521, reached an island in what would become the Philippines. It was then the feast of St. Lazarus, and Magellan named the island San Lazaro.

A week later, Magellan's fleet sailed on to Limasawa Island where the Europeans were befriended by Rajah Kolambo. In thanksgiving, the first Mass was celebrated in Limasawa on March 31, Easter Sunday. Later, Kolambo led the Europeans to Sugbu (Cebu) where they could find both food and spices. Magellan won the friendship of the island's chief Rajah Humabon. Learning from Magellan "beautiful words" like the Christian command to honor one's parents, Humabon asked for baptism and received the name Carlos in honor of the king of Aragon-Castile. His wife Hara Amihan was also baptized and given the name Juana. She fell in love with a statue of the Child Jesus, and Magellan gave it to her. The beginning of Christianity in the islands would henceforth be marked by the Mass at Limasawa, the baptism of Humabon, and the gift of the Sto. Niño.

Magellan got involved in the quarrel between the two chiefs of the nearby Mactan Island: Zula and Lapu-Lapu. He volunteered to do battle himself against Lapu-Lapu to show the chiefs how the Europeans fought. But his band of 49 soldiers had no chance against Mactan's fighting force of 1,500. The native fighters hit him with a poisoned dart and cut him down on the spot. The Europeans were forced to sail hurriedly lest the Cebuanos killed them. Under Juan Sebastian Elcano, the ship *Victoria* was able to return to Spain with only 18 survivors. Elcano was the first navigator to sail around the world.

Hence, the evangelization proper of the islands did not begin with Magellan. On February 2, 1543, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos reached eastern Mindanao but proceeded to the Moluccas. Some of his men had gone as far as Leyte, which they named Felipina in honor of the crown prince, the

PHILIPPINES

future King Philip II of Spain. Later this name would be given to all the islands.

The work of evangelization started with the expedition of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi which left the port of Mexico on November 19, 1564. With Legaspi was a veteran sailor who became an Augustinian priest, Fray Andres de Urdaneta. On April 27, 1565, Legaspi entered Cebu harbor unopposed. In one of the houses, a Greek sailor named Marmeo found a well-preserved statue of the Sto. Niño, probably the very image Magellan had given to Humabon's wife. Legaspi took it as a sign of God's approval of his adventure.

Legaspi made Cebu the base of the Spaniards' expansion to the other islands. In 1570, he sent Martin de Goiti to Manila where he defeated Rajah Soliman. Legaspi later moved to Manila and established Spanish settlements with the arrival of Spanish colonists from Mexico.

The missionary enterprise began. In the 16th-century Spain, it was generally held that the king could conquer and rule foreign lands provided that he helped the Catholic Church to spread Christianity. Augustinian missionaries who came with Legaspi started to preach the Gospel. The Franciscans followed in 1577, the Jesuits in 1581, the Dominicans in 1587, and the Recollects in 1606.

A REASON TO CELEBRATE

The year 2021 marks the fifth centenary of the coming of Christianity to the country. There are quarters who question why Filipinos should celebrate it. Isn't this purely a celebration for the Catholic Church which does not concern other people or the State, especially given the constitutional separation of the Church and State? Moreover, Christianity and colonization came together; the cross came with the sword and the cannon.

In response, different sectors remind especially the State to take into account the present reality: more than 81% of the population are Catholics. The government that ignores this celebration forgets that Christianity or Catholicism is an integral part of the history and culture of the Philippines. Christianization and colonization that came together had certainly their dark side—the suffering, atrocities, humiliation, and subjugation of the natives, the encomienda system, etc. But with mistakes and shortcomings came also the bright side. A balanced assessment of both is necessary.

The Catholic leadership in the Philippines would like to emphasize that what is celebrated in 2021 is not colonialism but 500 years of Christian faith. As Bishop Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan emphasized, the fact that Filipinos eventually repudiated colonial rule but

continued to embrace Christian faith even after they won the revolution against Spain could only mean that they did not equate Christianity with colonialism. At some point, the faith that they had embraced was no longer alien to them. It had succeeded in taking root on the fertile ground of their innate spirituality as a people.

It should be remembered in context that the mentality and purpose of the explorers of the time were for the colonialist countries—Spain and Portugal—to extend their power to the lands newly discovered. The same kind of mentality was true of other European colonizers. Today's consciousness cannot be imposed in judging the mindset in the period of colonization.

Still, one should not fail to appreciate what the early missionaries did to promote the good of the natives. For one, the early missionaries acted as the conscience of the colonizers. Following the example of Fray Bartolome de Las Casas and Francisco de Vittoria in the Americas, Manila Bishop Domingo Salazar and the missionaries denounced the abuses that were committed and questioned the subjugation of the natives.

The missionaries learned the language of the natives and adapted the Christian faith to their beliefs and practices. They developed the native culture by writing dictionaries and grammar books, and established schools. They supervised the building not only of churches but also of towns, roads, and bridges. They were instrumental in uniting the many islands and regions under the common Christian faith. Their presence likewise checked the spread of Islam and the attack of Moro marauders.

Even the nationalistic movement against the Spanish rule was inspired by the Christian teaching of the paschal mystery of Christ. This included the native Filipino clergy like Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora (GOMBURZA), revolutionaries like Andres Bonifacio, and intellectuals like Jose Rizal. Our heroes offered their lives for the liberation of the oppressed people.

Catholicism was so engrained in Filipinos that even Protestantism introduced by the American missionaries was not able to replace it.

PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

The bishops of the Philippines refer to the year 2021 as a year of great jubilee for the Church in the Philippines. To prepare for it, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) spearheaded "a nine-year journey for the New Evangelization," with a different theme for each year, recalling the Polish episcopate's "great novena" (1957-66) in commemoration of the 1,000th anniversary of the evangelization of Poland—an initiative that strengthened Catholic identity during the Communist era.

GIFTED TO GIVE

The logo of the celebration, dubbed "500YOC," carries the theme "Gifted to Give." This is based on Matthew's Gospel where Jesus commissions the Twelve (Apostles) to proclaim the Kingdom of heaven to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (10:8).

On November 29, 2020, the CBCP came out with its Pastoral Letter marking 2021 as Year of *Missio ad Gentes*. The Bishops noted: "As the theme chosen by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for this fifth centennial notes: all Christians are 'gifted to give.' This 'giftedness' motivated generous missionaries over the centuries; it must also enflame the hearts of all of us today to engage in mission here at home and in other countries (*missio ad gentes*). Indeed, this is part of Jesus' mission mandate to his disciples: 'What you have received as a gift, give as a gift' (Mt 10:8). We pray for a *missionary renewal* of our Church—both at home (*ad intra*) and beyond our borders

(ad extra) during our celebration of the 500 years—and into the future!"

Pope Francis is appreciative of the "gift" of Filipinos to the universal Church. On December 15, 2019, he celebrated the first *Simbang Gabi* at Saint Peter's Basilica. Fr. Ricky Gente, chaplain of Filipinos in Rome, noted in that gathering: "Almost 500 years ago, European missionaries planted the seed of faith in our beloved Philippines. We are happy and blessed because after five centuries, we are here in Europe and throughout the world, transmitting the joy and beauty of the Gospel."

In his homily in that Mass, the Pope acknowledged the role of Filipino migrant workers in the growth of Catholicism, saying that while the *Simbang Gabi* has been held in the Philippines for centuries, "in recent decades, thanks to Filipino migrants, this devotion has crossed national borders and has arrived in many other countries." The Pope also told the Filipinos to "continue being smugglers of faith," referring to how overseas Filipino workers "smuggle" their faith even to places where it is dangerous to be Catholic. He added: "You, dear brothers and sisters, who have left your land in search of a better future, have a special mission. Your faith should be leaven in the parish communities to which you belong. Today I encourage you to increase opportunities for meeting to share your culture and spiritual wealth while at the same time allowing yourselves to be enriched by the experiences of others."

PILGRIMAGE TO JUBILEE CHURCHES AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS

The spread of COVID-19 has greatly affected the immediate preparation and actual celebration of the Quincentennial of the Christian faith. Though trimmed down, the celebrations have pushed through. On February 25, 2021, Pope Francis granted Plenary Indulgences to Filipinos visiting over 500 Jubilee Churches across the country at any time until April 22, 2022. The Vatican requests pilgrims going to Jubilee Churches to pray "for the fidelity of the Filipino people to their Christian calling, for the increase of priestly and religious vocations, and for the defense of the family, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, the profession of faith, and an invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary."

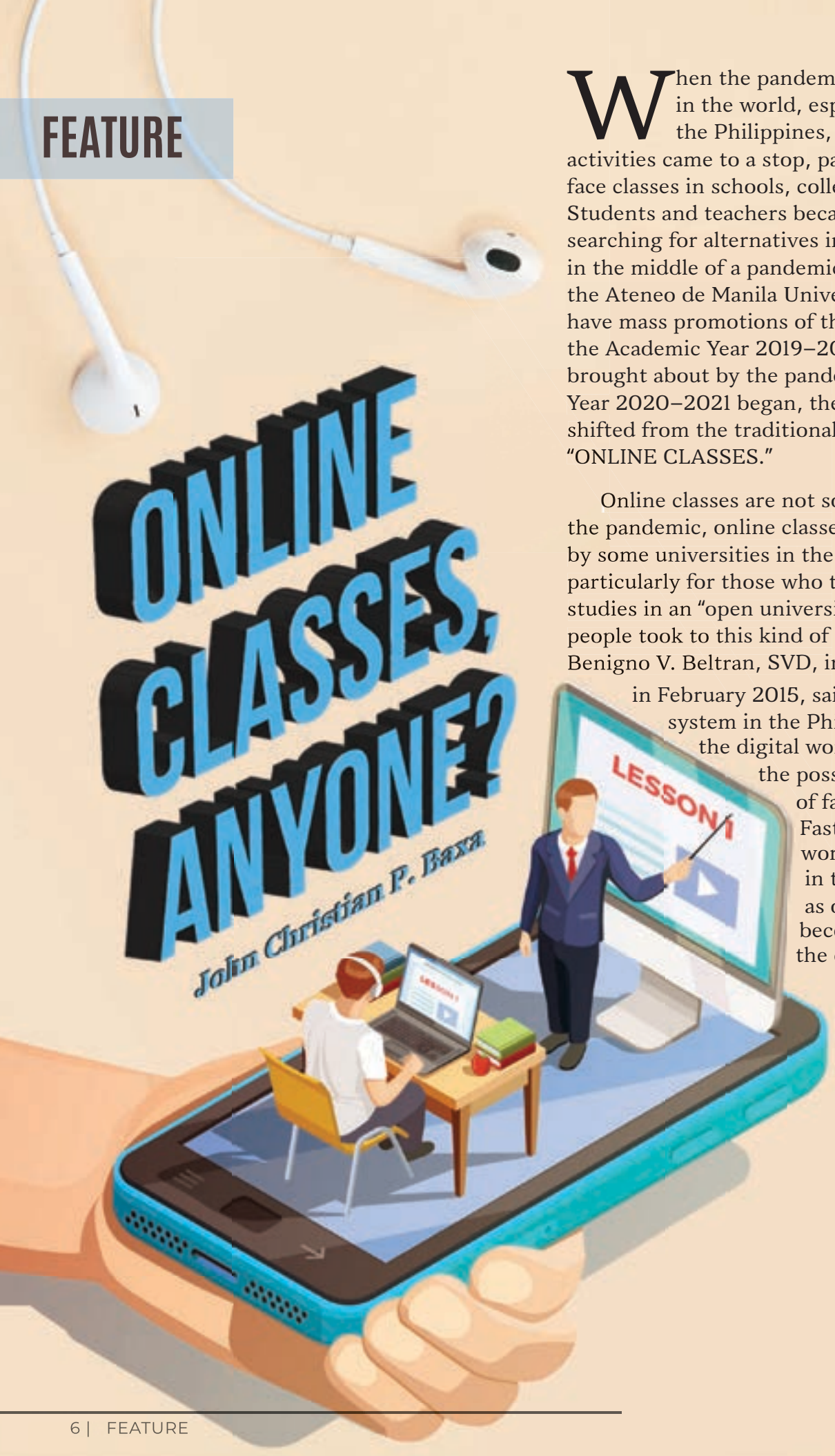
On March 14, 2021, Pope Francis himself presided over a truly festive Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter's Basilica to commemorate the arrival of Christianity in the country. Because of the pandemic, only 180 Filipinos, headed by Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, could participate in the celebration. Many wore the traditional Filipino attire, and the procession of the cross and the statue of the Sto. Niño was accompanied by Filipina dancers. Commenting on the Gospel passage, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (Jn 3:16), Pope Francis, in his homily, said that this is the heart of the Gospel, the source of our joy. This joy, he added, "is evident in your people. We see it in your eyes, on your faces, in your songs and in your prayers... I want to thank you, then, for the joy you bring to the whole world and to our Christian communities."

Dioceses have had different ways of celebrating. For example, there was the visit of the Sto. Niño de Cebu to Limasawa in Southern Leyte. The pilgrim image left the Basilica Minore on March 29 for Maasin City where a festive procession and a day-long celebration was held in its honor. Then there was the fluvial parade to Limasawa, the site of the first Catholic Mass in the Philippines on March 31, 1521.

In this digital age, Filipinos are turning to social media to learn and spread the message of the Jubilee. The anniversary theme song We Give Our Yes, composed by Fr. Carlo Marcelo and sung by Jamie Rivera, is being posted online in different versions and dialects. Other videos on the celebration are posted on Facebook, YouTube, and other digital platforms.

ONLINE CLASSES, ANYONE?

John Christian P. Baxa



When the pandemic COVID-19 erupted in the world, especially here in the Philippines, many of our daily activities came to a stop, particularly face-to-face classes in schools, colleges, and universities. Students and teachers became anxious and began searching for alternatives in continuing classes in the middle of a pandemic. Some schools, like the Ateneo de Manila University, decided to have mass promotions of their students after the Academic Year 2019–2020 to ease the stress brought about by the pandemic. When Academic Year 2020–2021 began, the mode of teaching shifted from the traditional face-to-face classes to "ONLINE CLASSES."

Online classes are not something new. Before the pandemic, online classes were being offered by some universities in the country and outside, particularly for those who take up postgraduate studies in an "open university." But very few people took to this kind of academic mode. Fr. Benigno V. Beltran, SVD, in an educational forum in February 2015, said that the educational system in the Philippines could shift to the digital world that would lead to the possibility of the absence of face-to-face classes. Fast forward now, his words are being fulfilled in this pandemic era, as online classes have become mandatory in the country.

My classmates and I are into this mode of learning. It is something new and can be exhausting. It is more asynchronous than synchronous, so the students have ample time to study and to learn at a time suitable to them.

Online classes in this time of pandemic have both positive and negative effects. Students are obliged to read the materials given by their professors, and this heightens their intellectual imagination on certain subjects taught in the real situation of the people. Being critical of certain issues that they read about is beneficial to their intellectual development that they can use in their future endeavors as priests, consecrated men and women, workers in the academe or in other professions.

Online learning, on the other hand, can make the life of students stressful. This is due to several factors. One is poor internet connection. There were times when we could not understand what our professors were saying, or we could not follow the discussions. This also prevented some students from submitting the requirements on time. Some professors were understanding, but some others were strict and did not give any consideration.

The second factor is poor environment. I am lucky because in our community's residence we have adequate facilities for online classes. But how about other students, especially laypeople who have no adequate space and time for study? Many students cannot concentrate on their class because of so much noise, humid climate, and household tasks.

Thirdly, online classes eat a chunk of our other scheduled activities, particularly in formation. Class requirements with submission deadlines and scores of learning materials to read or to watch at every session take up ample time meant for religious practice. In my community, Theology students are told to strike a balance in our studies, apostolate, and other community observances. But with the pandemic, working this out is quite difficult, considering the many academic requirements and deadlines to meet. In this situation, from 60 to 70 percent of the day is consumed by online classes.

Lastly, online classes do affect one's physical and mental health. Students may end falling into depression, overwhelmed by the class requirements. Some even commit suicide. Teachers and professors may suffer anxiety and depression due to the pressure of preparing their lessons or of making digital PowerPoint presentations. Overnight they are expected to be computer literate. On the other hand, online classes affect physical health, with students having insomnia or resorting to eating unhealthy food as they stay late at night in doing their assignments. They can easily get sick or lose energy.

If, as a postgraduate student, I have difficulty in this new mode of learning, I ask myself: How about ordinary students who do not enjoy the same facilities as I? How about young people who are in the peripheries or in far-flung areas, with poor internet connections? How about those who cannot afford to acquire gadgets or laptops, and to pay internet bills or loads for internet data? Given these factors in this time of pandemic, students may not achieve the best quality of education, not even a better one.

Digital technology is a great human achievement and, as such, a grace from God. It can be used as a new way of evangelization. It makes communication possible at a time when people keep physical distance from one another to avoid the spread of the virus. Online classes make it possible for education to continue despite the many inherent difficulties. There will be a place for digital education even when face-to-face classes will resume as the country emerges from the pandemic. Indeed, nothing can compare with the traditional face-to-face classes where one can learn by interacting with one's teachers and classmates, have access to the library, and have an ambiance for learning. I pray that we can return to the "normal" way of face-to-face education soon. But digital education is here to stay, and it can complement and enrich the "classical" mode of education—complement, I say, but not replace it.



TRAILBLAZERS:

AMID RESTRICTIONS, LST-ADMU STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY

Ian Gabriel Ceblano, SSP, and Ed Colmenares, SJ

Not even the pandemic can stop the students of Loyola School of Theology-Ateneo de Manila University (LST-AdMU) from loving and serving. As the number of COVID-19 cases rises, LST students turn to their creativity in doing their respective apostolate.

As early as March 2020, Ateneo DREAM Team, *Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan* (SLB) joined forces to conduct various relief operations. They distributed family grocery packs to various families and communities around the country. The relief packs were assembled by the various Jesuit communities on campus, San Jose Seminary, and several faculty and staff of AdMU. They provided hot meals for medical frontliners in selected hospitals in National Capital Region, like Philippine General Hospital, Lung Center of the Philippines, Mandaluyong Medical Center, National Bilibid Prison, and Jose Reyes Medical Center. They also sent medical supplies like personal protective equipment (PPEs), face shields, masks, and alcohol to over 150 hospitals all over the country. Some of the face shields were assembled by the Jesuits and San Jose seminarians who were on campus during ECQ last year. The coalition also engaged in relief operations when our country was hit by typhoons Rolly and Ulysses. They launched Project *Panunuluyan* that housed on-campus several frontliners from the Quirino Memorial Medical Center.

Other projects were done in preparation for the 2022 national elections. National Situationers, Discernment Circles, and *Kuwentuhang Bayan* were launched. These are ongoing programs organized by SLB upon the invitation of communities, schools, and other organizations as they gear their efforts towards voters' registration,

elections, and social engagement. Aside from the aforementioned initiatives, the LST community continues to support the community pantries in the Mother of Divine Providence Parish and the San Pedro Calungsod Mission Area in Payatas. They likewise help out in the feeding program of the San Pedro Calungsod Mission Area.

As in many dioceses, religious and diocesan students of LST immediately turned to online Masses and other programs to cater to the increasing pastoral needs of Filipino Catholics who had suddenly lost direct spiritual nourishment, normally provided by parishes and mission areas. They launched different initiatives in social media to help alleviate the physical, psychological, and spiritual distress experienced by many Filipinos. Several Jesuit scholastics helped in the *Sandaline* of UGAT. This is an online platform that provides crisis intervention and counseling for Filipinos. The Society of St. Paul initiated *Sambuhay Interaktib*, *Bless Me Father, Dear Pablito*, and *Saint Paul National Bible Quiz's Faith or Fake*, programs that accompany the faithful virtually in their day-to-day struggles in the light of Scriptures and the Eucharist.

These initiatives pioneered by LST-AdMU students and collaborators are explicit manifestations of the 2015 Vision-Mission of LST — "to form priests, theologians, and pastoral ministers who effectively respond to the ecclesial, spiritual, and social concerns of an increasingly missionary Church in Asia." Indeed, LST never fails to prepare its students to face the challenges posed not only by postmodernity in the Asian context, but also by unexpected turn of events, like the scourge of pandemic COVID-19. True to their word, LST-AdMU students will go, ever ready, "where there is greater need."







CREATION AND THE MYSTERY OF SIN AND EVIL

Tu Ja, SJ

INTRODUCTION

The writer deeply appreciates and thanks Loyola School of Theology (LST) and Arrupe International Residence (AIR) for the nourishment and empowerment of theological knowledge, wisdom, and insight through theological courses and sound Jesuit formation by both faculty members and formators in LST and in AIR during four years of theological studies and formation.

This paper will answer three questions: (1) Why does God permit this pandemic? (2) Where is God in this COVID-19 pandemic? and (3) Where does evil come from? These are questions raised by many people, and the answers in this paper are directed to the faith-based community, particularly the Catholic community.

I. ESSENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANT DEFINITION OF CREATION

According to the studies that have been developed and appropriated through the Genesis creation account, there are three characteristics of creation: free, orderly, and good. First, *creation is free*. To be created means *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*. In *creatio ex nihilo*, God created everything out of nothing (J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, 19), but it is out of love and gratuitousness. Every creature is absolutely dependent on God. In *creatio continua*, God's creative activity continues; divine providence exists in time (*The Christian Faith*, 413), along with the purpose and design of creation that God freely, intentionally, and purposefully willed. In *creatio ex amore*, God freely and gratuitously created the universe out of love. Love motivated the coming to be of creatures. Each creature is a spark of divine life and love. In *creatio ad amorem*, God intentionally and purposefully creates and recreates us. We are being created towards the direction of divine life and love.

Second, *creation is orderly*. *Dabar Yahweh*—God created the universe through his word of command, put order and life in communion and relationship. *Dabar Yahweh* is also word of law and order in the sense that the universe lives and moves according to how God declares what should be and how it should be. In laws of nature, creation is intelligible and good; created things and societies have their own laws and values, regularities, processes, structures, and interrelationships which we must gradually come to know, use, and organize according to the will of God (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 36).

Third, *creation is good*. God found it good to create something outside of himself. The material world is good. In maintaining the universal goodness of creation, the early Church resisted Gnosticism, which rejected the material world as evil. "Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness—'And God saw that it was good... very good' for God willed creation as a gift addressed to man, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to him" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 299). Creation is birthed out of the goodness of the Creator, who himself explicitly says that what he has created is good.

In addition, God gives human beings co-creatorship (*imago Dei*), the power of freely sharing in his providence by entrusting them with the responsibility of "subduing" the earth and having dominion over it. God enables men to be intelligent and free to complete the work of creation (*Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, 341), to perfect its harmony for their own good and that of their neighbors (CFC, 357). Responsible

stewardship means that we have the moral obligation not only to use the earth's goods responsibly but also to treat them with real respect as gifts from our Creator (CFC, 348).

II. THE MYSTERY OF SIN AND EVIL

In Christian doctrine, after the act of creation, the mystery of evil and sin took place. In understanding sin, we have to take into account the relationship of man with God. Sin is a rejection of God's offer of faithful love. In the Old Testament, sin is seen as a crime, an internal and willful violation of Yahweh's covenant relationship. Rejecting God means rejection of our filial destiny (ultimate goal). God is inviting us to live in union with him, but we are free to accept or reject his invitation. Rejecting God also means rejecting others and ourselves. There is an inner link between them; in refusing God (wanting to make ourselves as god), we destroy ourselves because we become alienated from the truth of our being.

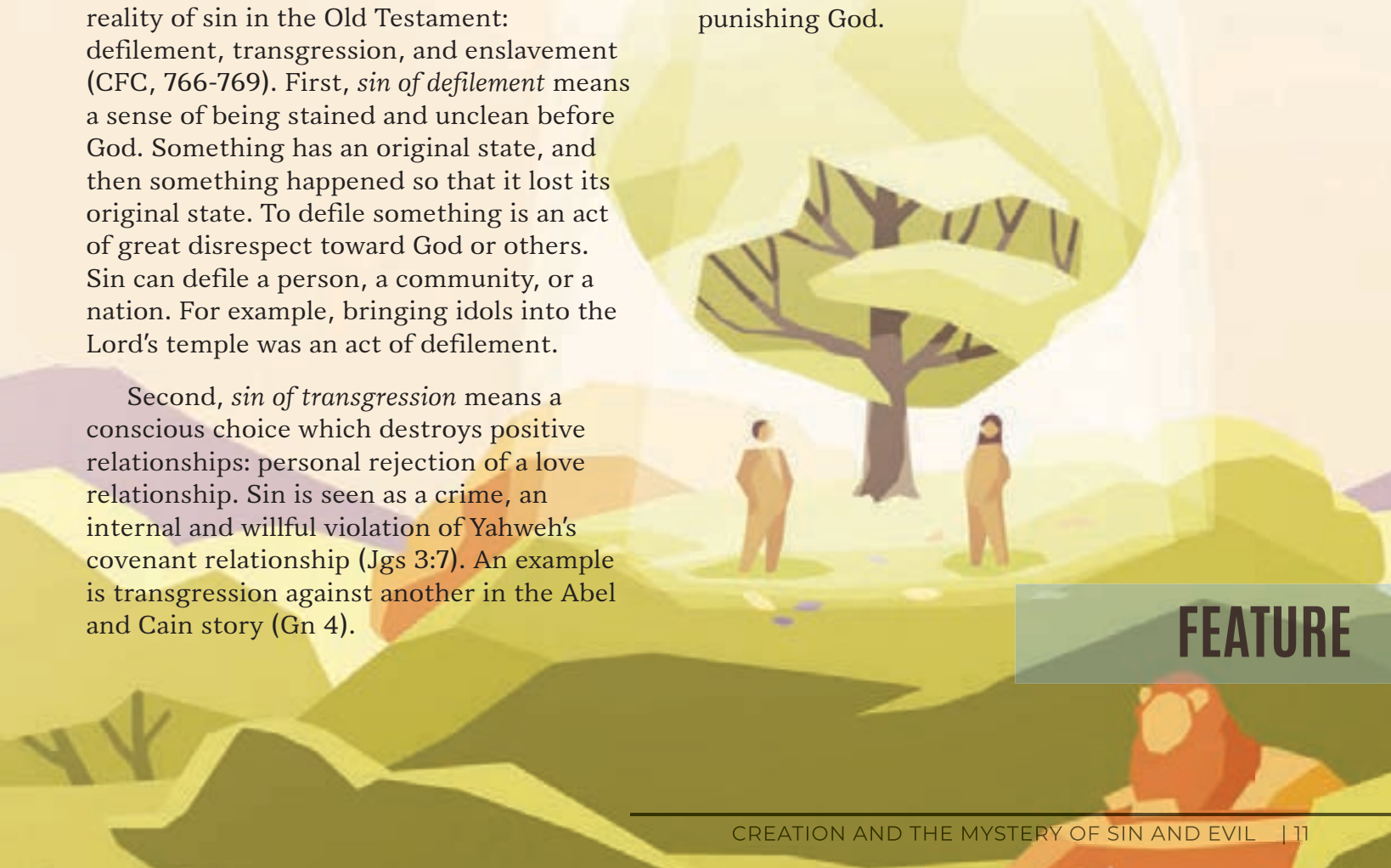
There are three aspects of the complex reality of sin in the Old Testament: defilement, transgression, and enslavement (CFC, 766-769). First, *sin of defilement* means a sense of being stained and unclean before God. Something has an original state, and then something happened so that it lost its original state. To defile something is an act of great disrespect toward God or others. Sin can defile a person, a community, or a nation. For example, bringing idols into the Lord's temple was an act of defilement.

Second, *sin of transgression* means a conscious choice which destroys positive relationships: personal rejection of a love relationship. Sin is seen as a crime, an internal and willful violation of Yahweh's covenant relationship (Jgs 3:7). An example is transgression against another in the Abel and Cain story (Gn 4).

Third, *sin of enslavement* means that the result of transgression is enslavement. It is a personal rejection or choice and rebellion against God. For instance, during the Israelites' wilderness journey after being freed from Egypt, the flaws in their thinking began to surface in their conduct. Within just two years, they rejected the righteous leadership of Moses, refusing to exercise their liberty to choose to enter the Promised Land and take it as their possession.

III. REFLECTIVE AND PASTORAL APPROACH IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In this time of COVID-19 crisis, many people are asking why God permits pandemic breakout. The word "permit" seems to be quite problematic to elaborate in this context. Without underestimating the question, the writer will answer based on theological knowledge, reflection, and insight. As starting point, it is crucial to have the right image of God. In this time of pandemic, many people give way to scruples that God is punishing human beings for the wrongdoings. It reflects a lot about the distorted image of God—as punishing God.



Hence, there is an urgent need to correct the distorted image of God. In the New Testament, Jesus introduces images of God's love to correct distorted images of God in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God is seen as punishing the Israelites for worshiping graven images of idols. Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son instead presents God as a merciful and forgiving Father (Lk 15:11-32). God's love is unconditional. God's love for us does not depend on our behavior; our sins do not lessen God's love, nor our good works increase God's love. God does not force us to love him; God invites us to communion with him. God is like a good shepherd who does not desire that anyone would be lost to sin, one who has compassion for sinners, who goes out of his way to bring the sinners back home to him.

The suffering image of God is reflected in giving his only Son that we may not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16). God's love for us is so great that in Jesus he is willing to suffer for us. God is always there to save us from suffering. God gives us freedom to choose. God accompanies us in time of our suffering, particularly in this COVID-19 crisis. In addition, the suffering is not the end in itself; there is always hope of life beyond suffering.

Secondly, in a more prudent and sincere way, people need to evaluate the contemporary lifestyle characterized by consumerism, individualism, anthropocentrism, and monopolism. Global consumerism leads to massive land-use. Pope Francis speaks of the tragedy of "throwaway culture" and proposes a lifestyle change (*Laudato Sì*, 20-22). The global market has made contemporary society drown in consumerism. The exceeding land-use for massive production has pushed more forests, animals, and other creatures, both small and big, into extinction. It has also caused air and water pollution from the chemical wastes. COVID-19 is a "clear warning shot," given that 75 percent of all infectious diseases come from wildlife, and climate change and the destruction of natural habitats are putting humans into ever-closer proximity to animals.

In most cases, human interventions cause the chaos to the biodiversity of the nature, particularly in this situation of COVID. "Human conduct is also leading to severe biodiversity loss, changing animal-human interaction and distorting ecosystem processes that regulate our planetary health and control many services that humans depend on."

Therefore, this pandemic signifies the urgency of conversion. In an interview on the *Querida Amazonia* Synod, Michael Cardinal Czerny, S.J., shares that the Church is to promote the ecological, social, cultural, pastoral dreams/conversions with healthy, sustainable, culturally sensitive, and future-oriented development. This is quite challenging and needs the response and participation of everyone. In going back to the Genesis account, as human beings, we need to respect and live in harmony with the orderly aspect of creation. Not to threaten anyone, but we are warned by the possibility of global climate change which will bring about the failure of crops and affect the lives of people globally. There will be no vaccine for this climate change.

In a straightforward language, it is time to say, "Enough is enough, we must act now!" There ought to be a transition toward a growth path, a healthy planet for future generations, a shift in the paradigm of production and consumption, which is at the core of all economic activities. The next phase of economic transformation should be more sustainable, with cleaner production and less material-intensive lifestyles.

IV. GOD IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

There are three groups of people at this time of pandemic: (1) people who are directly infected by COVID-19 and in critical conditions, (2) people whose family and relatives are infected, dead and grieving, and (3) people who are in lockdown and feel desperate and partly paranoid, with limited financial supply, and under threat

to get infected. They all have this common question: Where is God is in this pandemic crisis?

The writer would like to turn the question to how God makes himself present in this critical time. God is manifested in the faces of many people. In a more realistic and practical way, God is found in the faces of so many generous people who have been doing charitable deeds to the poor and the needy. God is present among frontliner medical doctors who choose to continue helping the patients tirelessly and selflessly though they have families of their own and they can get infected by the virus. A good number of medical doctors and nurses, in fact, have died from the virus infection. The God of love and compassion is at work through the hands of generous people.

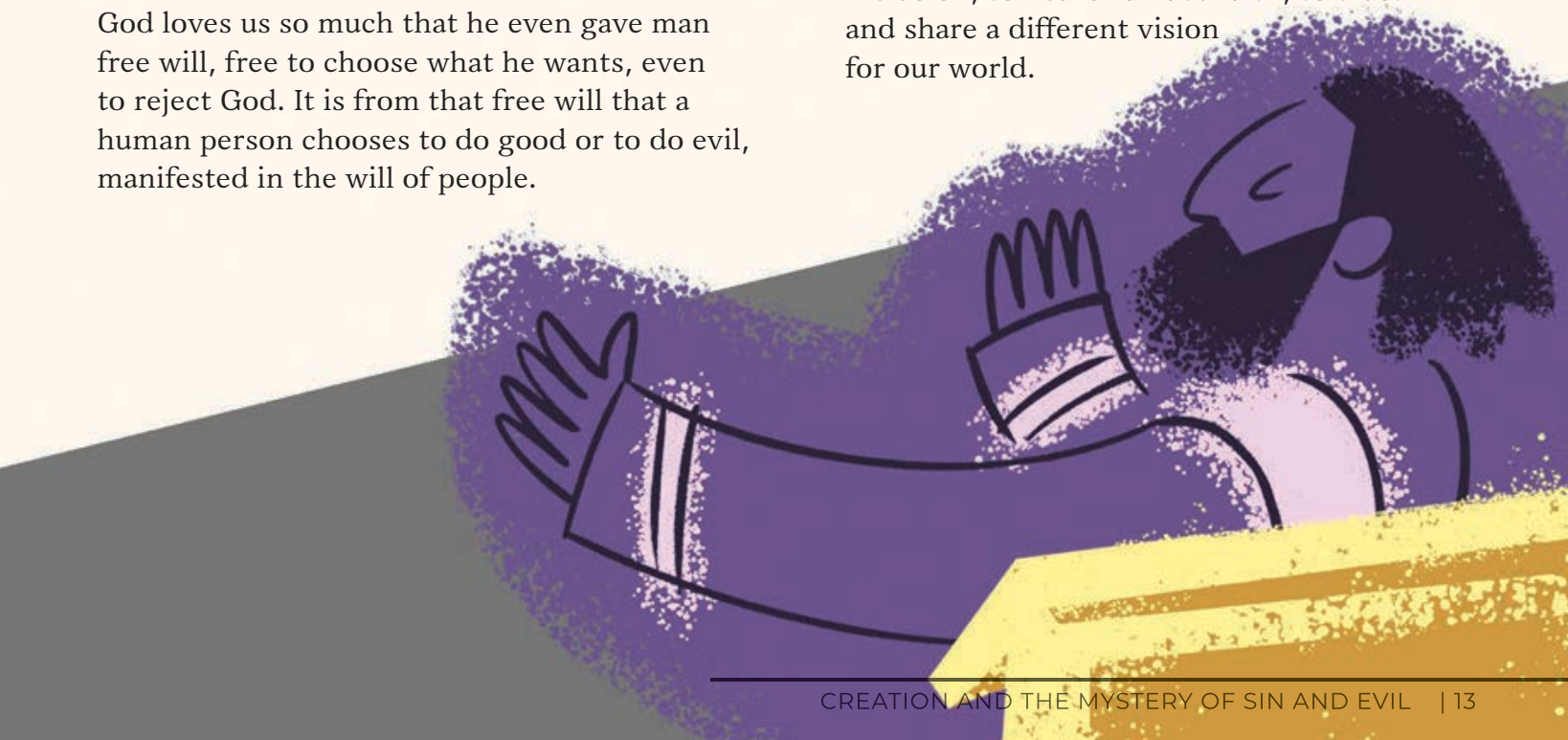
V. THE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL RELATED TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Suffering attacks our sense of self in different ways. It can cut us down to size and humble us before God. It can also make us wonder whether God is present or is on our side. We find that there is a way by which suffering can make us think more highly of what it means to be human. In a more theological and pastoral perspective, in this context of COVID-19, evil as destruction comes from the human heart. God loves us so much that he even gave man free will, free to choose what he wants, even to reject God. It is from that free will that a human person chooses to do good or to do evil, manifested in the will of people.

Evil lies behind COVID-19 breakout. People, enslaved by the desire for wealth, exploit nature for self-satisfaction and greed. The world has more billionaires than 20 years ago. The will for self-achievement and wealth pushes people to accumulate more, to exploit further without taking responsibility to sustain the health of mother earth. Scientists warn of disasters from global warming and global climate. Many people know and accept the fact that the earth is sick and needs healing. And yet people ignore the reality of our broken world and continue to drill and exploit the earth without restraint. People are to live with discerning spirit in the midst of challenges posed by defilement, transgression, and enslavement to sin.

CONCLUSION

As human beings, we need one another for growth; we are to support one another, and we need to come together globally as one in dealing with this COVID-19 crisis. This is the second worst global crisis after world financial crisis. We need to see this crisis as a time of conversion. We may not immediately go back to work or studies, but let us be open to grow with greater inclusion, to heal and have faith, to trust and share a different vision for our world.





THE EUCHARIST IN TIME OF PANDEMIC

Handrianus Masri, SX

INTRODUCTION

One effort to break the chain of the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak is by social-physical distancing, and, in concrete form, by staying at home. Churches have been closed or partially opened, following the instruction from the government and the bishops. Following livestreaming of Masses at home is one way of adjusting to the pandemic. Catholics attend the Eucharist celebration indirectly through livestreaming on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, or live broadcasting on TV. The series of celebrations for the Paschal Mystery during the Holy Week of 2020 and 2021 was shared in the same manner. Indeed, our faith, hope, and love cannot be extinguished even by the coronavirus. This reflection will delve on the theological significance of the Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery especially in the current situation of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery

There is a close relationship between the Eucharist and the life of the Church; the Eucharist "stands at the center of the Church's life" (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia,* 3). At the Last Supper, Jesus left a sacramental sign and commanded his disciples to preserve it for all time in his memory. The Church sees it as a very important legacy, celebrated by the believers since the beginning: "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The "breaking of the bread" refers to the Eucharist. While breaking the bread in the Eucharist, the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery that capsulizes the events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Jesus' Resurrection. Hence, in every celebration of the Eucharist, we are spiritually brought back to the Paschal Triduum (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia,* no. 3).

In the Eucharist, the Church continues the mission of Christ to save the world. Through the Eucharist, Christ is present, offering himself as a pleasing sacrifice to God, giving mankind the bread of life, and bringing the whole Church

to the hope of resurrection and eternal life. The Eucharist is "the source and summit of all Christian life" (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium,* 11). There is no Church without the Eucharist, yet Christ has entrusted the Eucharist to the Church to present to humanity the gratuitous work of salvation.

Through the Eucharist, the Church is related to the risen Christ. The Church is connected both to the past (Jesus' death) and the future, the second coming of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26). The congregation that gathers becomes the visible dimension of Jesus Christ as Savior. In this regard, the desire to celebrate the Eucharist is the Church's desire for the Lord. In the Eucharist, Christ's saving event is manifested in the midst of the Church. This is what drives the Church to relentlessly remember and present Christ's sacrifice to the Father in a sacramental manner, in every community that offers it through the hands of ordained ministers (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 12). Herein lies the mystery of the Eucharistic celebration that transcends all human understanding, but at the same time also brings salvation to humans. Such faith is celebrated by the whole Church as thanksgiving that presents Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all. In this regard, through the Eucharist, Christ reconciles us with the Father. Thus, Christ's sacrifice which culminated on the cross becomes the hope and salvation that leads people to the purification of the soul, forgiveness of sins, and reception of the Holy Spirit (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17).

IMPORTANCE OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The Eucharist is important in the life of the Church because the Eucharist becomes a "remembrance of Christ" (Lk 22:19). Likewise, the Lord's meal becomes a reminder of his death, the impact of which is experienced by the congregation who are gathering (1 Cor 11:26). By eating bread and drinking wine, the believers enter into and become part of the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16). The Lord's Supper is a revelation or expression of faith in the person of Jesus Christ.

The congregation, by receiving the body and blood of Christ, are invited to direct their entire lives to full communion with Christ. Receiving the body and blood of Christ brings the Church together in the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ himself. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, which unites the whole Church with Christ by the action of the Spirit, the Church is brought in the hope of enjoying the heavenly banquet. This glorious eschatological hope is expressed in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is "the source and summit of all Christian life" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).

Moreover, the Eucharist is a sacrifice because the celebration of the Eucharist is a memory of Christ's Passover (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 1365). The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very word of institution: "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me... This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" (Lk 22: 19-20). On the cross, Christ gave up his body to be broken and poured out his blood as sacrifice for us his body, "shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28). So, the Eucharist is a sacrifice, because it makes present Jesus' sacrifice, giving himself up on the cross (CCC 1366).

The Eucharist is a living and pleasing sign of Christ's sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice happened once and for all on the cross (Heb 10:10). The memory or anamnesis of salvation that took place through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in the Eucharist celebrates the past and the present and anticipates the future. Thus, the Eucharist is celebrated beyond time and space. It is not limited to the place of celebration, nor can there be a period when it ends. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, it remembers the Paschal Mystery through which the salvific plan of our loving God is presented. Hence, the sacrifice that Christ offered on the cross once and for all always remains effective (Heb 7:27).

Furthermore, every time the mystery of the Passover of Christ is celebrated in the Eucharist, the Church presents the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave his body and blood as a ransom for all human sins, overcame the eternal death, and reconciled us with the Father (J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, The Christian Faith, 648).

The mystery of redemption is present in the form of the Eucharist. Jesus who sacrificed himself on the cross is the same Christ who gave his body and blood in the Eucharist. There is a union between Jesus' "bloody" sacrifice on the cross and Jesus' offering his body and blood to his disciples at the Last Supper. The Church that welcomes Jesus' sacrifice sacramentally manifests the redemptive power of Christ in his life and in his glorious resurrection.

LIVESTREAMING AS AN INNOVATIVE PASTORAL EFFORT

In celebrating the Eucharist, the Church underlines the participation of the people carried out by their respective duties and roles (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 28). Through participation in the Eucharist, the people are united with one another and gathered together with and in Christ. John Paul II explains this unifying reason: "Our union with Christ, the gift and grace of each of us, enables us to share in him in the unity of his body, the Church" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 23).

In special circumstances, if a person cannot be physically present during the celebration of the Eucharist, union with Christ and with the Church continues. This spiritual union has two dimensions: the invisible and the visible. The invisible dimension is the union with the Father which takes place in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit and among believers. The visible dimension is unity with the teachings of the Apostles, with the sacrament, and with the hierarchy of the Church. In this context, the absence of people due to emergency reasons can be understood. Thus, physical absence does not break the union that Christ gave his people.

During this "emergency" time of COVID-19, the Church's hierarchy turns to technological advancements to help people who cannot attend the Mass. In hospitals, speakers have been connected to microphones in chapels. Masses are broadcast via television in real-time or recorded. Dioceses and parishes use internet technology by livestreaming.

UNITY WITH CHRIST IN THE "MISSED COMMUNION"

Participation in the Holy Sacrifice makes the believers' heart resemble Christ's own, sustains their strength in the pilgrimage of life, makes them yearn for eternal life, and unites them even now to the Church in heaven (CCC 1419). However, the harsh conditions and dangers due to the pandemic prevent Christians from celebrating the Eucharist physically. Still, the desire to attend the Eucharist brings about the fruits of Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council teaches that when people do not have the opportunity to receive communion, the general priesthood of the faithful is carried out "in prayer and gratitude, by witnessing to the holy life, by denying oneself and active love" (Lumen Gentium, 10). The community that "gathers" before a livestreaming celebration of the Eucharist experiences the living presence of the Lord and unites with the Church, praying to God for the suffering world, for those who suffer from coronavirus, for the frontliners, and for many other vulnerable and affected people. Following the livestreaming of the Eucharist is a way of showing our solidarity and compassion with the suffering world, a way of presenting to God our "helpless" reality as human beings. We also pray for our healing and that of the whole world. We are closely united with the whole Church that sees Christ's suffering in this pandemic (*The Christian Faith*, 1511). It is only in faith that we will be able to experience "becoming more and more like Jesus" who suffered.

BECOME A LIVING EUCHARIST LIKE FRONTLINERS

During this time of the pandemic, we appreciate most the dedication and service of the frontliners.

They are showing us an example of being a "living Eucharist." Because of their sacrifice, they become a living Eucharist which is Christ's own sacrifice. They give and risk their lives for the sake of others. Just like the bread that is broken and shared, their life is offered for the sake of others. Their services make present the institutional words of Jesus: "This is my body, which will be given for you" (Lk 22:19). Their lives have become a living Eucharist. They show us what it means to be a Eucharistic person, living in communion with God who suffers through and in others.



CONCLUSION

The Eucharist is the living heart of the Church; without the Eucharist, the Church dies, bereft of Christ's Spirit. The Eucharist is celebrated as a tangible manifestation of the Church's loyalty to Christ who gave his body and blood as a sacrifice and as ransom for humanity. Jesus' self-sacrifice took place once and for all. The Eucharistic action of the Church makes present this sacrifice of Christ here and now, making it everlasting and effective.



The impossibility of people to be physically present to attend the Eucharist does not reduce or eliminate the unity with the Lord. Through livestreaming of the Mass, believers enter into fellowship with the Lord who loves them. Interior or "spiritual" communion makes possible the intimate union in faith, hope, and love, and further increases the believers' desire for physical union with Christ himself and with one another.

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THE AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS AND THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Fr. Emilio Edgardo Quilatan, OAR

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Philippines, "discovered" by Ferdinand Magellan for Spain in 1521, was officially incorporated into the Spanish Empire under King Philip II in 1565. The king himself ordered an expedition from Mexico under the command of Miguel López de Legazpi to proceed to the Philippines and conquer the islands. They set sail in 1564, with the first group of Augustinian friars among those on board. The ships reached Cebu on February 13, 1565, and the evangelization of the Philippines began. The vast mission field in the archipelago required more missionaries to work. The Spanish crown ordered the following religious orders to go to the Philippines: the Franciscans (1578), the Jesuits (1581), and the Dominicans (1587).[1] In 1594, King Philip II issued a royal decree to Governor-General Luís Pérez-Dasmariñas that assigned the missionary orders in the Philippines by regions and provinces. Three years later, Governor-General Francisco Tello de Guzmán reported to King Philip II that the distribution of the orders had been fully implemented.[2] The division of the archipelago among the religious missionary orders ushered in a systematic evangelization of the Philippines. However, lack of missionary personnel continued to plague the Philippine missions.

AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS: FOUNDATION

The Augustinian Recollects were the fifth group of missionaries who arrived in the Philippines in 1606. They were also known as "Recoletos" who traced their origins to the reform-minded Spanish Augustinians during the height of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the second half

of the sixteenth century. Those Spanish Augustinians were inspired by a collective desire for a more austere and perfect way of life. On December 5, 1588, the provincial chapter of the Augustinian Province, which was held in Toledo, Spain, granted legal recognition to them. Moreover, they were allowed to open three or more monasteries in Spain for men and women who aspired to the Augustinian Recollect way of life. As their numbers increased, more monasteries were established in Castile, Spain.[3] Fray Luis de León, an Augustinian friar and scholar, wrote the first Constitution for the Augustinian Recollects, the "*Forma de Vivir*" (Way of Life). Its fourteen chapters encapsulated the charism of the Augustinian Recollection, that is, directed towards ascetic living and the intensification of contemplative and communitarian life. On February 11, 1602, the Recollect monasteries were organized as a province with their own Prior Provincial but subject to the Augustinian Prior General in Rome. Between 1602 and 1621, more monasteries were opened in Spain and the Philippines. On June 5, 1621, the Augustinian Recollection was elevated to a semi-autonomous Congregation under the Augustinian Prior General in Rome. Full autonomy was granted to the Augustinian Recollects only when Pope Pius X elevated the Augustinian Recollection to a Religious Order on September 16, 1912.

MISSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Augustinian Recollects responded to the call of the Church to meet the urgent demand to evangelize the Philippines. They sent ten priests and four religious brothers to pioneer the mission. On May 12, 1606, 13 reached Cebu. One priest had died at sea on their journey from Guam. From 1606 to 1610, the Augustinian Recollects accomplished the following: first, they opened their first house in Bagumbayan (now Luneta Park); and second, they opened their first mission fields that cover the present provinces of Bataan, Zambales, and Western Pangasinan



(1606-1679/1712-1925). Other Recollect houses were opened and served as bastions of spiritual and conventual life in the archipelago. Those houses were: Intramuros (1608/9), Cavite Puerto (1616), San Sebastian (1621), and Cebu (1621). In 1621, as the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollects, all houses and missions in the Philippines were organized as a religious province under the patronage of St. Nicholas of Tolentine. The Province of St. Nicholas had a unique status in the Congregation in that while the Augustinian Recollect communities in Spain were definitely contemplative and conventual, their communities in the Philippines were strictly missionary but without neglecting contemplation and community life.[4]

When the Augustinian Recollects arrived in the Philippines in 1606, the archipelago was already divided into mission districts as they had been entrusted to the Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans since 1594. The Augustinian Recollects were entrusted mission territories having the following characteristics: firstly, they were given the most remote areas to evangelize; secondly, their missions were bereft of government concern and assistance; thirdly, their *visitas* or mission bases were isolated from each other; and lastly, their mission centers, especially Palawan, Mindoro, Romblon, and Masbate, were often highly exposed to frequent pirate incursions





coming from Mindanao.[5] The Augustinian Recollects accepted whatever was given to them and were motivated to accomplish them, as they were intent on the conversion of souls in rendering "great service to God."[6]

From 1610 until the eve of the Philippine Revolution, more Augustinian Recollect missionaries came to the Philippines as more souls were added to their spiritual care. In 1622, the Cebu diocese entrusted the eastern half of Mindanao, northern Palawan, and the Calamianes to the pastoral care of the Recollects. Other difficult mission territories were added to the pastoral solicitude of the Recollects: Romblon-Banton-Tablas (1635-1933), Mindoro (1679-1936), and Masbate-Ticao-Burias (1687-1791). The Franciscans, due to lack of personnel, ceded to the Recollects their missions in Binangonan de Lampon, Baler, Casiguran, and Palanan de Cagayan, areas that are now in the Provinces of Aurora and Quezon. The Augustinian Recollects sustained these missions from 1658 to 1704.[7] In the eighteenth century the colonial government ordered the Recollects to accept the missions in Central Luzon, particularly the mission of Mabalacat, Pampanga (1713-1898), where it became the Recollect mission station that opened other missions in Tarlac — Bamban, Capas, O'Donnell, and Moriones. The missions in Tarlac also catered to the spiritual needs of the Aetas.[8] In the Diocese of Nueva Cáceres, the Recollects took over the parishes of Bulusan, Casiguran, and Donsol in Sorsogon from 1760 until 1768.[9] Later, in 1795, the Recollects accepted the pastoral administration of Las Piñas.[10]

The Augustinian Recollects ministered to two towns in Panay Island from 1761 to 1768, namely, Bátan (Aklan) and Mambusao (Capiz). In the Visayas, the island of Siquijor, located beside Negros Oriental, was entrusted to the Recollects, and they arrived there in 1794.[11] In Cebu Island, the Recollects received from the Augustinians the town of Danao (1747) and administered the parishes of Mandaue (1846), Liloan (1846), and Catmon (1856). Moreover, the Recollects founded in Cebu the towns of Carmen (1851), Compostela (1863), and Consolacion (1871). In the Camotes Islands near Cebu, the Recollects administered Poro Island (1848) and Pilar Island (1859), and founded a town in San Francisco Island (1863).[12]

More mission territories were entrusted to the Augustinian Recollects when the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish dominions by King Charles III. In 1768, some of their former missions were given to the Recollects: the western part of Mindanao, Basilan Island, Bohol, Marinduque, and the Marianas Islands. In 1848, the colonial government entrusted to the Recollects the

evangelization and development of Negros. In the second half of the eighteenth century, more parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila were entrusted the Augustinian Recollects. This was due to the Royal Decree of July 31, 1860, when Queen Isabel II ordered the Recollects to vacate the whole Mindanao missions and handed them back to the Jesuits. In another Royal Decree dated September 10, 1861, the same monarch declared that, "the Augustinian Recollects are to receive parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila – Rizal, Cavite, Batangas and Laguna – once they become vacant" to compensate the loss of their missions in Mindanao.[13]

From 1606 to 1896, the Augustinian Recollects did their best as "pastors of souls" to the Filipino people. They evangelized the locals while facing dangers from native revolts and attacks of pirates, from sickness and disease, and from shipwrecks and natural calamities. They endured limited resources, the great distance of their mission territories, and sometimes complications in dealing with the colonial government with whom they had some disagreements on the matters of defense of the missions against pirates and the collection of tributes from the native population. In spite of the aforementioned problems and difficulties, the Recollects successfully and painstakingly transformed the missions assigned to them into prosperous towns and parishes. Before the start of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, the Recollects took care of 1,249,399 souls in 203 towns from 20 provinces in the archipelago. The Augustinian Recollects ranked second to the Augustinians in their evangelization efforts in the Philippines, and because of their pastoral care for the natives, Nick Joaquin called the Augustinian Recollects "Pastors of the Philippine Mission."[14]

ST. EZEKIEL MORENO (1848-1906): AN AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT SAINT AMONG FILIPINOS

St. Ezekiel Moreno spent 15 fruitful years of his priesthood as an Augustinian Recollect missionary in the Philippines (1870-1885). He was one of the founders of Puerto Princesa (Palawan). He was an outstanding missionary and model pastor. He was ordained a priest in Manila on June 2, 1871. As a missionary, he was infected with malaria while doing mission work in Palawan (1871-1872). The tropical illness did not hinder the saint from dispensing his pastoral and missionary duties. He was assigned to Mindoro (1872-1876), Las Piñas (1876-1879), Sto. Tomas in Batangas (1879-1880), and Sta. Cruz in Manila (1880-1882). He was made administrator and prior of the Recollect hacienda in Imus, Cavite, in 1882. During the cholera epidemic, from November to December 1882, St. Ezekiel assisted the sick and gave the last rites to dying victims. In 1885, he left the Philippines for Spain. His superiors assigned him to their novitiate in Monteagudo, in Navarra, as the local superior of the community. He served in that capacity for three years, from 1885 to 1888. Later, he volunteered as a missionary in Colombia. On January 2, 1889, St. Ezekiel and his fellow Spanish Augustinian Recollects arrived in the Colombian capital, Bogotá. Their mission was to revive the fledging Augustinian Recollection in Colombia



that was in danger of extinction. St. Ezekiel lived in Bogotà until 1894, the year he was assigned to the Recollect mission in Casanare. He was consecrated bishop on May 1, 1894, and became Vicar Apostolic of Casanare. Two years later, he became bishop of Pasto. The saint served there from 1896 to 1905. In 1905, symptoms of cancer of the nose and the palate started to manifest. The following year, Bishop Ezekiel left for Madrid, Spain, where he had two unsuccessful operations. Resigned to his condition, he decided to go back to the Recollect novitiate in Navarra. Arriving in Monteagudo on June 1, 1906, he chose a small upper room near the chapel with a gallery from which he could look down on the sanctuary and immediately see the tabernacle and the statue of Our Lady of the Way to whom he had always been particularly devoted to. He died on August 19, 1906.

Pope Paul VI beatified Ezekiel Moreno on November 1, 1975, at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. On October 11, 1992, Pope John Paul II canonized him in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He was declared "Patron Saint of Cancer Patients" and "Model Pastor of the Americas" during the Fifth Centenary of the Evangelization of the Americas.[15]

SIGNIFICANT AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

A. The Vigan Cathedral and Episcopal Palace

The present Vigan Cathedral and its old Episcopal Palace were constructed under the direction of the Augustinian Recollect Bishop Juan Ruiz de San Agustín, who served in the Episcopal See of Nueva Segovia from 1780 to 1796.[16] The construction of the cathedral lasted ten years, from 1790 to 1800. The cathedral has Baroque features with ranking cornice extending to the sidewalls. The two bell towers were built several meters away from the church. Its design was Italian inspired Baroque.[17] Moreover, the construction design of the cathedral was adapted to the region, which is prone to earthquakes. The Vigan Cathedral is one of the Spanish colonial churches that have been described as "earthquake baroque" due to its thick and massive walls. Huge buttresses reinforced the walls, and the height of the church is not too high.[18]

B. St. Joseph Church and the Bamboo Organ of Las Piñas

The church of Las Piñas, dedicated to St. Joseph the Worker, was built by Padre Diego Cera between 1795 and 1819. The church's façade is reminiscent of the early Renaissance.

Padre Diego Cera was a memorable figure to the people whom he loved and served, but he was best remembered for the famous "Bamboo Organ" which he built. Fr. Pedro Herce, Recollect historian, wrote:

> He [Cera] started his work by selecting carefully bamboos of different sizes, thickness, and texture. He then buried them in the sands on the beach. The bamboos upon exhumation, one year after, were intact. These bamboos were chosen to produce his strange project: to construct an organ in which the registrations were made of bamboo. The organ as it exists



today is 5 1/2 meters in height, with complete scales and 23 registrations. In 1822, the Bamboo Organ was installed in the church... It was and is the only one of its kind in the entire world.[19]

C. San Sebastián Basilica, Quiapo, Manila

The San Sebastian Basilica is an all-steel church that is famed as the first pre-fabricated structure to be erected in the Philippines. Engr. Genaro Palacios y Guerra designed this all-steel church to withstand the forces of nature. It was pre-fabricated in Binche, Belgium, and eight steamships transported the steel parts of the church to Manila.[20] The design of the church is Neo-Gothic Revival and is similar to the early English Lancet Gothic period that is characterized by tall and narrow lancet openings, projecting buttresses, pinnacles, and a steep pitched roof.[21]

On June 24, 1890, Pope Leo XIII raised the San Sebastian Church to the rank of Minor Basilica that is permanently attached to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy. It was the first church in the Philippines that was elevated to such status. The Basilica of San Sebastián was inaugurated on August 15, 1891. It houses the oldest image of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the Philippines. This Marian image arrived from Mexico in 1618, and it was enthroned at the San Sebastian Church on May 5, 1621. That same year, the first Carmel Confraternity was established in the church. Finally, Rome granted the Augustinian Recollects of the San Sebastian community the privilege and faculty to bless, impose, and promote the "Brown Scapular" in the Philippines until the arrival of the Carmelites after the Second World War.[22]

D. The Black Nazarene Devotion

Filipino Catholics throng the Basilica of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, Manila, every January 9 for the annual "Traslación" to commemorate the Augustinian Recollects' donation of the image of the Black Nazarene and its transfer to Quiapo Church.[23]





The Augustinian Recollect historians could not find any historical document that could give the exact date of the arrival of the image or images of the Black Nazarene. The image may have arrived in Manila between 1640 and 1650, or possibly earlier. It is also probable that the Augustinian Recollects brought two images of the Black Nazarene — one that was placed in one of the side altars of the Recollect church in Intramuros, and the other one was used for the procession in Intramuros every Palm Sunday. The second image was under the care of the Confraternity of Jesús Nazareno that was canonically established in the Recollect church in Intramuros in 1651. The Second World War destroyed much of Intramuros, including the San Nicolás de Toléntino Church of the Recollects. Only the image of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo survived.

FROM PROVINCE OF SAN NICOLAS DE TOLENTINO TO PROVINCE OF ST. EZEKIEL MORENO

On June 5, 1621, Pope Gregory XV elevated the Augustinian Recollection to the rank of a Congregation with its own Vicar General. From the thirteenth to the thirtieth of November of that same year, the Augustinian Recollects celebrated its first General Chapter in Madrid. One of the provisions of the General Chapter was the creation of the four provinces of the Congregation – three in Spain and one in the Philippines. For the Philippine Recollect Province, St. Nicholas of Tolentine was chosen as its titular patron. Moreover, the First General Chapter gave the St. Nicholas of Tolentine Province a peculiar character that is distinctive from the other three Recollect Provinces. While the three provinces in Spain were conventual, the Saint Nicholas Province was strictly missionary.

Additionally, the Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentine was the only Augustinian Recollect Province that was founded outside Spain. The Provincial Curia was located in Manila — first in Bagumbayan, then in Intramuros. The history of the province includes the following significant events:



First, the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentine was founded 100 years after Magellan discovered the archipelago and celebrated the first Easter Sunday Mass in the islands.

Second, for 345 years, the Province and its missionary friars contributed to the evangelization of the islands and were temporarily present in Japan (1623-1632) and Guam (1768-1898/1974-1989). However, during the Philippine Revolution (1898), the Province extended its missionary presence in Venezuela and Brazil in South America; and in the twentieth century, the Province opened missions in China (1924-present) and Taiwan (1963-present).

Third, the Province accepted and promoted native vocations to the religious and priestly life.



Dionisia and Cecilia Rosa Talangpaz, biological sisters, with the help of the Augustinian Recollects of San Sebastian Convent, Manila, established the Augustinian Recollect *Beaterio* (1725) catering to Filipino women's vocations, which later flourished and became the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters of the Philippines (1970). For Filipino men, there were few vocations in the first 300 years of the Province's history. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, more Filipino vocations were accepted, and four seminaries were built in response to the growing number.

Fourth, the Province saved the Augustinian Recollect Congregation from extinction when the Spanish Liberal and Anti-clerical government persecuted the church in Spain and closed most of its monasteries and cloistered convents. The Province's novitiate in Monteagudo, Spain, was spared from closure because it was the house of formation for Recollect missionaries sent to the Philippines.

Fifth, in the provincial chapter of 1940, the Province opened its doors officially to the educational apostolate and founded formal schools accredited by the American colonial government. In 1941, Santo Tomás de Villanova Institute in San Carlos, Negros Occidental, and San Sebastián College-Recoletos, Manila, opened their doors to the Filipino youth. Later, other schools were opened in the islands and two became universities — the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos in Bacolod City, and the University of San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City.

Sixth, on November 28, 1998, during the 52nd General Chapter held in Monachil, Granada, Spain, the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno was born from the Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentine. Thus, the spiritual-missionary torch was passed by the mother province to her daughter province, the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, comprised of the Philippines, Taiwan, and Sierra Leone. In 2019, Saipan and Indonesia were added.

At present, the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, to respond to the call of revitalization of the Order, commits itself towards deeper renewal and commitment as Augustinian Recollects. Since 2018, the Life and Mission Project (LAMP) of the Province has been defined in the following:

MISSION-VISION STATEMENT

In line with the OAR Life and Mission Project (LAMP) and guided by the Vision of the Order, we, as a Province, assume as our own the Mission "to live and proclaim the Gospel, bearing witness to a contemplative and fraternal life, at the service of the Kingdom and in a shared mission with lay people."

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Placing all our trust in God's Mercy, we, the Augustinian Recollects of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, desire to be creators of communion and witnesses to Gospel values through our consecrated life and service to humanity.

Endnotes:

1. Pablo Fernández, OP, History of the Church in the Philippines,1521-1898 (Manila: Life Today Publications, 1988), 19-25.

2. Antolín Abad, "Filipinas: Labor Misional y Pastoral" en Historia de la Iglesia en Hispano-america y Filipinas, II (Madrid: Biblioteca Autores Cristianos, 1992), 723.

3. The Augustinian Recollect houses established between 1589 and 1600 were the following: Talavera de la Reina (1589) in Toledo; Spain, Portillo (1590) and Nava del Rey (1591) in Valladolid; Madrid (1594); and El Toboso (1600) in Toledo. See Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, Vol. I: Desde orígines hasta el siglo XIX (Madrid: Editorial Augustinus, 1995), 190-203.

4. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, Vol. I, 359-361, 374-378.

5. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, The Order of Augustinian Recollects: Its Charismatic Evolution (Manila: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 1994), 50.

6. Crónicas I, 397-399 cited by Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, Vol. I: Desde orígines hasta el siglo XIX, 360. Partly translated to English by Prof. Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

7. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia, 398.

8. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia, 597-598.

9. Licinio Ruiz, ORSA, Sinopsis Historica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Toléntino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden delos Augstinos Descalzos, Vol. I (Manila: Tip. Pont. de la Univ. de Sto. Tomás), 606-610.

10. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, "Florilegio documental sobre el p. Diego Cera (1762-1832)" en Recollectio, Vol. VIII (1985), 277-353.

11. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia, 599, 621.

12. Fidel de Blas, Labor Evangélica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas expuesta en cuadros estadisticos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Toléntino (Zaragoza, España: Establecimiento tipográfico de Pedro Carra, 1910), 33-34.

13. Licinio Ruiz, Sinopsis Historica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Toléntino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden de Agustinos Descalzos, vol. II (Manila: Tip. Pont. de la Univ. de Sto. Tomás, 1925), 244; see Ángel Martínez Cuesta, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, vol. II: El Siglo XIX (Madrid: Editorial Augustinus, 2015), 812-815; 840-850.

14. Nick Joaquin, Small Beer: "The 'Minor' Ones," Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 25, 1988.

15. Note: The years of St. Ezekiel's pastoral assignments are just estimates. For details see the saint's biography written by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, Bishop Ezekiel Moreno An Augustinian Recollect Saint Among Filipinos. Quezon City: Agustinos Recoletos, 1993.

16. Francisco Sádaba, 268-269.

17. From this point on, the architectural descriptions of selected Augustinian Recollect Churches in the articles are taken from the book of Norma I. Alarcon, Philippine Architecture During the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1991), 254.

18. Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Volume I: Peoples of the Philippines, s.v. "Ilocano" by A. Azurin et al.; op. cit. Volume III: Philippine Architecture, s.v. "Vigan Cathedral" by R. Javellana.

19. Pedro Herce, ORSA, "The Recollects in the Philippines" in Boletín Eclesiastico de Filipinas, vol. XXXIX (Jan.-Feb., 1965), nos.435, 251.

20. Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, The Spires of San Sebastian (Manila: San Sebastian Parish, 1991), 60-66.

21. Alarcon, Philippine Architecture, 228-229.

22. José María Martínez, OAR and Nicolás Salvatierra, OAR, The Basilica of San Sebastian (Manila: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 1993), 123-130; Romanillos, The Spires of San Sebastian, 14-23. The Order of Discalced Carmelite Friars (OCD) of the Province Immaculate Heart of Mary, Washington, arrived in the Philippines in 1947. The Dutch Carmelites of the Ancient Observance (O. Carm.) arrived in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, in 1958. See The 2018-2019 Catholic Directory of the Philippines (Quezon City: CBCP-Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2018), 395, 399.

23. The word "traslación," i.e., transfer, became synonymous to the grand procession of the Black Nazarene every January 9.

FEATURE

THE BENEDICTINES

IN THE PHILIPPINES

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The Benedictines arrived in the Philippines towards the close of the 19th century. The pioneers of the Philippine Mission came from the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat in Barcelona, Spain. They came to do missionary and parish work in parishes established by the Jesuits in Surigao. Abbot Jose Deas y Villar led a delegation of eight priests and six brothers who arrived in Manila in the morning of 12 September 1895 and stayed temporarily in Sta. Ana with the community of the Society of Jesus. On 25 April 1896, the monks were able of acquire a house at Balmes St., Tanduay, which would be their home base in Manila.

The Benedictines stayed in Surigao from May 1896 to September 1909, when they turned over parishes to the "Dutch Fathers"—Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Within that period, the Philippine Revolution against Spain (1896-98) broke out, and the Americans took over from Spain (1898), sparking the Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

With the US annexation of the Philippines, a colonial period under the Americans started, and Protestant influence in education in the Philippines commenced. Even before the transfer of the Surigao Mission to the Sacred Heart missionaries, Father Superior Fr. Juan Sabater (who succeeded Abbot Deas), in December 1900, thought of counteracting the American Protestant influence by establishing a school. This educational institution was for the defense of the Catholic Faith. It was also a way to sustain the monastic community with suitable work for its members. After overcoming several obstacles, such as the lack of trained personnel, finances, permit to operate, suitable place, and the uncertainty of the future, trusting in Divine Providence, the Benedictine Community in Manila approved

the establishment of a school, named after the great English Benedictine scholar and saint, St. Bede the Venerable. On 17 June 1901, *El Colegio de San Beda* opened its gates in Arlegui with Fr. Silvestre Jofre, the first Rector, celebrating the opening Mass at six in the morning. Dom Jesus Y. Mercado designed the first college seal in 1916. Patterned on the medal of St. Benedict, it had "COLEGIO DE SAN BEDA" inscribed on the circumference (instead of the original medal's Latin initials). The red and white flag of the *Confradia del Niño Jesus de Praga*—the association of students devoted to the Infant Jesus—was at the center, with the initials R.C. (*Romano Catolico*). While the school colors of red and white had already made its appearance, it would only be in 1940 that Fr. Sergio Martinez, athletic moderator, would adopt the Red Lion as the symbol for the Bedan fighting spirit.



By 1918, the American influence had become widespread enough to cause the dominance of the English language in teaching, as well as the change in name from "El Colegio de San Beda" to San Beda College.



The late Abbot Celestino Gusi's legacy improved the physical arrangements of the structures in the Abbey and the College. More importantly, he worked tirelessly to *Filipinize* the abbey. He discontinued the earlier practice of bringing in monks from Spain to serve in the Philippines. Fr. Anselmo Sison, one of the first Filipino Benedictines, received the responsibility of recruiting Filipinos to become monks. Among the early novices who survived the rigors of Benedictine formation were Fr. Celestine Say (who became the first Filipino Prior) and Fr. Benito Afuang, who became the first Filipino Principal in San Beda.

Such developments in the recruitment of Filipinos to the monastic life, however, had its roots in the precarious dearth of vocations, which had started two decades earlier. No novice had entered the cloister since the financially disastrous 1930s.



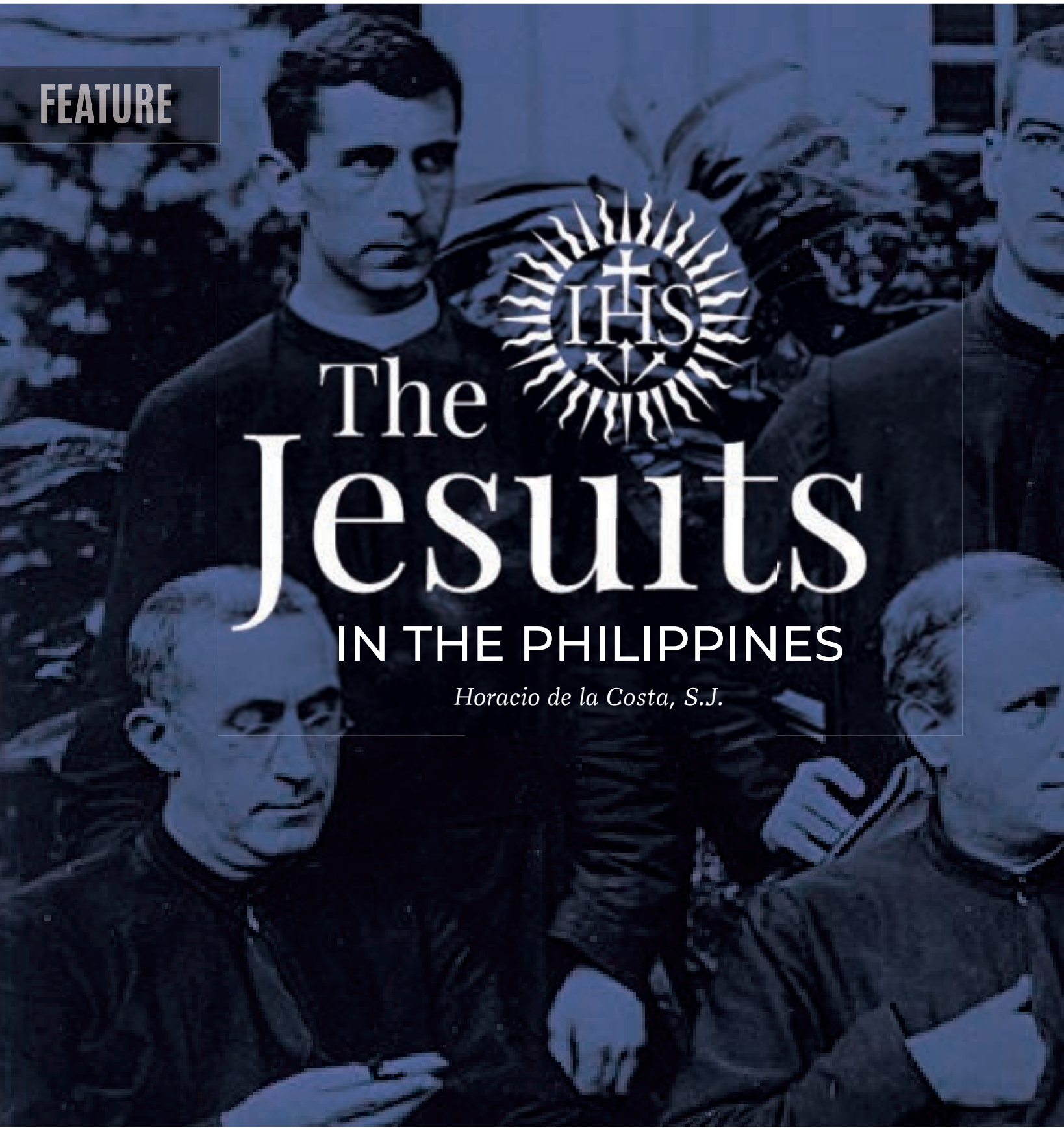
When Abbot Gusi's group arrived in 1948, there were only eight Spanish priests left in the Abbey. Fr. Silvestre Lacson, one-time Prior Administrator in the Abbey and San Beda Rector, referred to Abbot Gusi's decision to recruit Filipinos as "a watershed in Benedictine evolution." Those who passed the litmus test and withstood the vocation fallout in the years following the reforms promulgated by the Second Vatican Council guided the Abbey's and College's progress through the turbulent political unrest of the 1960s.

The 1970s saw the Community's bold decision to establish another school in Alabang, Muntinlupa, then almost an uninhabited grassland. *Benedictine Abbey School* (BAS) or San Beda Alabang opened its gates to 78 preschool boys and girls students on 10 July 1972. Fr. Roberto de Jesus, OSB, who was the first Rector, supervised the growing years of the new institution. Worth noting is that BAS pioneered the modern concept of the *non-graded open classroom instructional system*. In school year 1977-1978, BAS opened its high school department. In 1995, to commemorate the Benedictine Community's Centennial in the Philippines, the Abbey Community decided to rename BAS to St. Benedict College. On 7 September 2004, after 32 years of existence, the College made a historic decision to adopt the secondary name of the institution as its official name: San Beda College Alabang.

In the 1980s, the Abbey began the foundation of the Transfiguration Monastery in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, which eventually became an Abbey in 2017. Some other developments that the Benedictines made in the Philippine evangelization and education were the expansion of San Beda College to the Rizal Campus and the subsequent attainment of a University Status in 2019. To date, the Benedictine Community strives to instill and propagate the Catholic faith to more and more Filipino youth.

In 2020, the Benedictines celebrated their 125th year of presence and service in the Philippines.

FEATURE



The Jesuits
IN THE PHILIPPINES

Horacio de la Costa, S.J.



Excerpt reprinted from Philippine Studies Vol. 7, No. 1 (1959): 68-83, by permission of the Ateneo de Manila University

The first Jesuits to come to the Philippines arrived in Manila on 17 September 1581. They were Father Antonio Sedeño, the superior of the group, Father Alonso Sánchez and Brother Nicolás Gallardo. A fourth member, the scholastic Gaspar Suárez de Toledo, younger brother of the theologian Francisco Suárez, had died during the voyage from Mexico.

They had been sent at the request of Don Guido de Lavezaris, the second governor of the Philippines, and Fray Domingo de Salazar O.P., its first bishop. Father General Mercurian's instructions were that they should familiarize themselves with conditions in the colony and report on the advisability of establishing a permanent Jesuit mission.

While carrying out these instructions, they made themselves useful in various ways. They had been given a house outside the walled city in a fishing village called Lagyo, between the present districts of Ermita and Malate; but they went daily into the city to perform their priestly ministry among the Spanish settlers, their Filipino domestics, and the Chinese and Japanese immigrants who were beginning to flock to the Philippines, attracted by the trade.

Father Sedeño is credited with having introduced the arts of stone-cutting and brick-making to the Philippines, and with having supervised the construction of the first stone buildings in Manila. Father Sánchez was entrusted with highly important tasks by both the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities. When Bishop Salazar convoked a synod in 1582, he appointed Sánchez its secretary. Later that year, Governor Ronquillo sent him on a delicate mission to Macao. Philip II of Spain had just won the disputed succession to the crown of Portugal, and it was important that the Portuguese of Macao should be persuaded as quickly as possible to give him their allegiance. Sánchez accomplished this mission successfully.

FIRST MISSION

Meanwhile, a few more Jesuits had been sent to assist Sedeño, and it now became possible to undertake mission work in the provinces. In 1591 the missions of Taytay and Antipolo, in the present province of Rizal, were founded, and in 1593 Father Pedro Chirino was sent on a temporary mission to the island of Panay. It was here, in the village of Tigbauan some miles west of the modern city of Iloilo, that Father Chirino established the first Jesuit school in the Philippines, an elementary school for Visayan children.

After finishing his business at Madrid on behalf of the Philippine colonists, Sánchez reported to Father General Acquaviva at Rome. He strongly recommended that the Society establish itself permanently in the Philippines. Father Acquaviva concurred and raised the Philippine Mission to the status of a vice-province dependent on the Province of Mexico. Word of this decision and of the appointment of Father Sedeño as vice-provincial reached Manila in 1595 with a large contingent of missionaries: eight priests and one brother.

THE COLLEGE OF MANILA

With these welcome reinforcements, Father Sedeño did two things. He informed the governor, Don Luís Perez Dasmariñas, that he was now ready to comply with the government's request that a Jesuit college be opened in Manila. Ever since 1585, not only the government but the bishop and the colonists had been urging him to take this step, but uncertainty as to the status of the Jesuit mission and lack of personnel



obliged him to refuse. He now had the men he needed, and in September 1595 Father Juan de Ribera, professor of moral theology, and Father Tomas de Montoya, professor of grammar, delivered the inaugural lectures of the new College of Manila. By this time, the Jesuits had transferred their residence to a large compound just inside the southwest gate of the walled city, then called the Royal Gate. Sedeño had built a church there, facing northeast along what is now General Luna Street, and the attached residence was enlarged to accommodate the college.



SAMAR AND LEYTE

Father Sedeño's second step was to request that the vice-province be entrusted with the evangelization of the islands of Samar and Leyte, where no permanent mission stations had as yet been established. Upon the request being granted, he ordered Father Chirino to proceed there immediately with a small band of missionaries and to select suitable sites for the first stations. They chose Carigara on the north and Dulag on the east coast of Leyte. While these stations were being opened, Father Sedeño went personally to Cebu to establish there a central mission house. He had barely completed the arrangements for it when he fell sick and died (2 September 1595), only a few days before the formal opening of the College of Manila.



Some years later, Father General Acquaviva directed Diego Garcia, a priest of wide administrative experience in Peru and Mexico, to conduct a visitation of the Philippine vice-province, organize its expanded work on a sound basis, and determine along what lines further expansion should proceed. Father Garcia arrived in the Philippines in 1599. He reported to the General that the vice-province now had five mission stations in Leyte, one in Samar and one in Bohol; and that these, together with the mission of Antipolo near Manila and the mission of Mandaue near Cebu, comprised 54,330 souls, of which 12,696 were already Christians. One of the Leyte missionaries, Father Alonso de Humanes, had opened a boarding school for boys at Dulag. This produced such excellent results that Garcia himself opened a similar school at Antipolo.

THE COLLEGE OF SAN JOSE

At the College of Manila, the need for boarding facilities for the students was felt even more keenly. In the opinion of the professors, unless the students were withdrawn from the numerous distractions of life in a colonial outpost, they could not be made to pay proper attention to their books. Garcia took immediate steps to remedy the situation. In 1601, with the full approval of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, he founded a residential college attached to the College of Manila, and this residential college was named the College of San Jose. It occupied a separate building in the Jesuit compound. Here the resident scholars lived under the supervision of Jesuit prefects, though they attended classes in the College of Manila with the day scholars.

Like the College of Manila, the College of San Jose received its endowment after it had been founded, and from the same source. Rodriguez de Figueroa, who had endowed the College of Manila, drew up a will in 1596 in which he set aside a sum of money to establish and maintain a boarding school in Manila under Jesuit auspices. This grant was,



however, conditional, for the testator wished in the first place to provide for his children, and it was only in the event that his daughter Juana should die in her minority that the endowment would actually take effect. Juana perished in a shipwreck while being taken by her tutor to Mexico, and thus part of the Figueroa estate, consisting of a cattle ranch in Panay and properties in Mexico, became an *obra pia* or trust fund administered (not owned) by the Society of Jesus for the pious purpose indicated by its donor.

PHILIPPINE NOVITIATE

Garcia had the vision to foresee that the Philippine vice-province could not be adequately supplied with men from Europe and America; it should as soon as practicable draw at least a part of its membership from the Philippines itself. Actually, Sedeño and his successor, Ramon Prat, had already received into the Society several candidates, who were being trained in the Manila residence. Garcia conceived the



plan of establishing a separate novitiate at Antipolo, but he ran into financial difficulties and the transfer was not actually effected until 1606. Two years later Captain Pedro de Britto and his wife offered their estate in San Pedro Makati, a district near Manila, for a novitiate. The offer was accepted, but the construction of a suitable building took so long that the novices were not able to occupy it until 1622.

CHIRINO'S REPORT

To go back a little in our narrative: in 1602 Garcia sent Chirino to Rome to give Father General Acquaviva a detailed account of the state of the vice-province and its works. Acquaviva was so favorably impressed by Chirino's report that he had him edit it for publication. It appeared in Rome in 1604—the first published work on the Philippines by a Jesuit, and a primary source of information on Philippine history and culture ever since. Moreover, the General decided on the basis of Chirino's information that the organization of the vice-province was sufficiently advanced for it to be made a full-fledged province independent of Mexico. True, it was not self-sufficient as far as men were concerned and would not be for a long time to come; but as regards finances it was already self-supporting. Moreover, distance and slowness of communication made it imperative that its superior should have the powers of provincial.

THE PHILIPPINE JESUIT PROVINCE

In 1605, therefore, the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus was erected with Father Gregorio Lopez as first provincial. It had a total membership of 67, distributed among 11 residences, namely, a college of secondary and higher studies (the College of Manila), a residential college annexed to it (the College of San Jose), seven mission residences, and two mission stations. Ten candidates, six for the priesthood and four for the brotherhood, were undergoing their novitiate.

THE VISAYAN MISSIONS

The principal difficulty encountered by the Jesuits in the Visayan missions was that of persuading the people, whose way of life was based on shifting agriculture, to abandon their dispersed clan villages and come together in large, permanent towns where they could be properly instructed in the Christian faith and the arts of civilization. They saw at once that mere compulsion was ineffective; for the change to be permanent, the Visayans had to be made to realize the advantages and learn the techniques of settled agriculture. While this process, necessarily slow, was going on, the missionaries experimented with several different ways of carrying on their work until they decided what they considered to be the most effective. This was to form themselves into several groups ("task forces," to borrow naval terminology), each group consisting of three or four priests and two or three brothers, based on a central residence. From this residence they would go out in teams to visit the clan villages of their area by turns, preaching, baptizing, administering the sacraments and providing

medical assistance. As soon as one team returned to the residence, another set out, and so throughout the year. Thus, until a settled parish life could be evolved in which the people went to their priest, the priest went to the people.

THE MORO WARS

One big obstacle to the formation of large settled communities in the Visayan islands in the seventeenth century was the almost yearly expeditions made by the Moros or Muslim Malays of southern Philippines for the purpose of securing slaves. The monopoly of the carrying trade of Southeast Asia established first by the Portuguese and then by the Dutch took away from seafaring communities such as those of Magindanau and the Sulu archipelago their principal means of livelihood. On the other hand, the increased demand for spices and other tropical products resulted in expanded production and a call for plantation labor. The Magindanaus and Sulus were not slow to perceive that this fact provided them with a highly profitable alternative to their former trading activities. Their geographical location placed them strategically between the slave markets of Indonesia and a vast reservoir of human quarry, the unwarlike peoples of the Visayan islands. With their swift, shallow-draft *caracoas* or cruisers and their superlative seamanship they could steal upon an unsuspecting sea-coast village, fall upon it and be off with their captives and booty before anyone had time to organize a defense. They started with small hunting packs in the last years of the sixteenth century; but as the profits of the traffic came to be realized, the raiding expeditions grew in size and scope until, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, predatory fleets of thirty, forty and more cruisers were ranging as far north as Manila Bay itself.

The early Spanish governors made several attempts to reduce the Moros to submission, but without success. Rodriguez de Figueroa, the great benefactor of the Philippine Jesuits, perished leading one such attempt. The government then resorted to purely defensive measures. A fleet of armed galleys was organized to patrol the interisland seas, but these heavy vessels, built on the Venetian model, were too slow and lay too deep in the water to be effective against the Moro cruiser. The galley commanders themselves believed that the only way to stop the raiders, short of carrying the war into their own country, was to establish a base at the tip of the Zamboanga peninsula and thus control Basilan Straits; for it was through these straits or past them that the Moros had perforce to pass during the season of the southeast monsoons in order to strike at the Visayas.

MINDANAO MISSIONS

This plan had the full support of the Visayan Jesuits, whose missions were the hardest hit by the raids. They had taken their own measures of local defense, such as building watchtowers, training and arming militia, and fortifying their mission compounds to serve as citadels for their flocks; but such measures were not always proof against surprise attacks. The government finally fell in with the plan after repeated urging by Father Pedro Gutierrez, the founder of the Jesuit mission of Dapitan in northern Mindanao. In 1635 the military and naval base of Zamboanga was set up with an initial force of 300 Spanish and 1,000 Visayan troops. Another Jesuit, Father Melchor de Vera, designed and supervised the construction of the fort.

Soon afterwards a new and vigorous governor, Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, decided to take the offensive. In 1637 he took Lamitan, the principal stronghold of the Magindanaus, by assault, and two years later conquered and occupied Jolo, the capital of the Sulu sultanate. The Moros of the district around Lake Lanao, faced with simultaneous attack from north and south, submitted. In all these expeditions, Jesuits went as chaplains to the troops and stayed to minister to the garrisons and to begin the conversion of the Moros.

It was difficult and dangerous work. They had the millennial tradition of mutual hatred between



Muslim and Christian to overcome, besides the fact that the government with which they were necessarily identified had come bringing not peace but a sword. They made sincere conversions chiefly among the laboring classes and the slaves; the warrior class, if they accepted Christianity at all, did so out of policy. Yet, even the most resolute Muslims among them could not altogether withhold their friendship from such men as Father Alejandro Lopez, whose absolute integrity and fair-dealing won their reluctant admiration.

In 1663, Governor Manrique de Lara took the hasty step of withdrawing all troops from Mindanao, including the garrison of Zamboanga, in order to concentrate them in Manila against a possible attack by the Chinese warlord Koxinga (Cheng Ch'engkung). The attack did not materialize, but neither was the Zamboanga station restored. It was a serious blow to the Jesuit missions among the Moros, for at that time the fathers had not won the confidence of the More rulers sufficiently to be able to dispense with the support of the Spanish government.

Zamboanga was not reoccupied until 1718. Once again, the Moro missions were entrusted to the Society. They made enough progress to warrant the elevation of the Zamboanga residence to the status of a "college"—not in the sense of a school, but of a central house which had dependent upon it a series of mission stations extending southwards into the Sulu archipelago and eastwards along the southern coast of Mindanao as far as Cotabato. In 1748, it even looked as though the Sultan of Sulu, Alimud Din I, might become a Christian. The authorities whisked him to Manila and had him instructed for baptism. He was baptized, however, against the advice of the Jesuits who knew him best. Their cautiousness was confirmed by the event, for the sultan soon belied his profession of Christianity. When the Spanish government put him under arrest for treason, the Sulus mounted an offensive. The Visayan settlements defended themselves heroically under the leadership of their Jesuit and Recollect pastors. In northern Mindanao, particularly, military honors were shared by the Recollect Fray Agustin de San Pedro, surnamed *El Padre Capitan*, and the Jesuit Francisco Ducos, defender of Iligan. Strange honors for messengers of the gospel of peace; but the times were desperate and demanded desperate measures.

TAGALOG MISSIONS

Yet, although raiding Moros remained an ever-present peril, the Visayan missions made considerable progress during the

seventeenth century. The massive mission churches of Bohol, Leyte and Samar, many of which still stand, though they are only now beginning to be appreciated as particularly splendid examples of Philippine colonial architecture, prove that by the latter part of the seventeenth century when they were built, the Jesuit missionaries had largely succeeded in transforming the semi-nomadic tribes they had found upon arrival into a settled Christian population. Among the Tagalogs, they added to their original mission of Taytay-Antipolo the towns of Silang, Indang and Maragondong, in the present province of Cavite, besides accepting the chaplaincy of the troops and shipyard workers in the great naval base of Cavite proper. They also took charge of the island of Marinduque, off the southern coast of Luzon, and mission stations along the east coast of Mindoro.

THE GUAM MISSION

In 1668 Father Diego Luís de Sanvítores and a small band of companions founded the mission of Guam. The Guamanians did not at first take kindly to their ministrations, killing several of them and their successors. Among the most illustrious of these martyrs was the founder of the mission himself, who gave his life for Christ in 1672. The resulting drain on the personnel of the province stopped further expansion for the time being, even within the Philippines. It was resumed early in the eighteenth century with the establishment of a chain of mission stations in the western half of Negros island, the reactivation of the Moro missions referred to above, and the discovery, exploration and evangelization of the Palaus, where two Belgian members of the province, Fathers Jacques Duberon and Joseph Cortil, were martyred in 1711 or 1712.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN MANILA

Meanwhile, the College of Manila and the affiliated College of San Jose made slow but steady progress through the seventeenth century. The former, although not a university in the strict sense, granted university degrees in philosophy and theology by virtue of the privileges conferred by the Holy See on colleges of the Society of Jesus. Its right to do so was challenged in 1648 but was confirmed by the Council of the Indies in 1652. In 1733 Philip V of Spain founded two regius professorships in the college, one of canon and another of civil law. Starting from that date, the institution is frequently referred to in contemporary documents as the University of San Ignacio. In 1750 Governor Ovando founded a chair of mathematics, a discipline which at that time embraced certain applied sciences such as navigation and military engineering.

The institution made important contributions to original research in the fields of moral theology, botany, linguistics, history and geography. In the early part of the seventeenth century Fathers Juan de Ribera and Diego de Bobadilla were often consulted by the government as well as by the clergy and private persons regarding moral problems arising from the often unprecedented conditions of European rule in an Asian country.

TRAINING OF THE CLERGY

Although the residential College of San Jose was not founded exclusively or even explicitly as a seminary for priests, it obviously lent itself to this purpose. Many of the scholarships founded in the institution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were burses for the training of secular priests. The college remained a small one by modem standards. The highest recorded enrollment is 49, in 1753. From its foundation to 1768, when the Jesuits ceased to administer it, an estimated 992 students passed through its halls. Among the alumni whom it has been possible to identify are one archbishop, eight bishops, 40 secular priests, 11 Augustinians, 11 Augustinian Recollects, three Dominicans, eight Franciscans, 46 Jesuits and 93 laymen.

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES

The church built by Sedeño was so badly damaged by successive earthquakes that it had to be replaced. Work on the new church began in 1626 under the direction of an Italian Jesuit,



Father Gianantonio Campioni. It was completed in 1632, a fine example of baroque architecture, with a cruciform ground plan, an octagonal dome, and two towers on the facade, one a bell tower and the other a clock tower. From the very beginning the college fathers sought to make it the church of the Filipinos and other non-Europeans who resided in the walled city either as domestic servants, artisans or shopkeepers. Sermons and instructions were given not only in Spanish but in Tagalog, and a Sodality for Tagalogs was organized as well as one for Negroes (which included Indians, victims of the slave trade).

Outside the walled city, the Jesuits had charge of the Chinese parish of Santa Cruz and the Japanese parish of San Miguel. Closed retreats for laymen were conducted both in the Manila college itself and in the San Pedro Makati residence, which was used as a villa and house of retreats after the removal of the novices. Closed retreats for women were conducted in the house of a religious community which came to be known as the *Beatas de la Compañia de Jesus*, but whose official title today is the Religious of the Virgin Mary. This, the first religious congregation of women to be organized in the Philippines, was founded in 1684 by a Chinese-Filipino mestiza of Binondo, the saintly Ignacia del Espiritu Santo.

Mother Ignacia's spiritual director, Father Paul Klein, helped her to write the constitutions of the congregation, which she modelled closely on the constitutions of the Society of Jesus. It was this, and the fact that the sisters lived near the college and performed their devotions in the college church, which led to their being called *beatas de la Compañia*, although there never was any juridical connection between the two communities.

EXPULSION

In 1767, Charles III of Spain, for reasons which he preferred to keep locked in the royal bosom, decreed the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from all the Spanish dominions. The decree reached the Philippines the following year. The Manila Jesuits were immediately placed under arrest, their books and papers confiscated, their houses sealed. Those in the provinces were conveyed under escort to Manila. Of the 140 members of the Philippine Province, 21 were certified by the government physician as being too ill to travel. The remainder were sent in four groups

to Spain between 1769 and 1771, and from Spain deported to the Papal States.

The Jesuit parishes and missions in Leyte and Samar were transferred to the Franciscans, those in Cebu, Panay, Negros, Bohol and northern Mindanao to the Recollects. and those in the Tagalog provinces to the secular clergy. All the buildings and properties of the Order were confiscated by the Crown. An exception was made of the endowment of the College of San Jose, which was regarded as a pious foundation administered but not owned by the Society. Its administration was transferred to the archbishop of Manila, along with the physical plant of the College of Manila which Archbishop Sancho made over into a diocesan seminary.

In 1773, Clement XIV, under pressure from the Bourbon courts of France, Spain, and Naples, suppressed the Society of Jesus throughout the world. Pius VII restored it in 1814. Spain was in the throes of revolution, with anti-clerical liberals arrayed against clerical conservatives. The restored Society had barely returned to Spain when it was expelled again in 1822. Readmitted, it was suppressed by royal decree in 1834; restored in virtue of a concordat with the Holy See in 1851; expelled a third time in 1868; and permanently legalized in 1880.

RETURN

In 1852, soon after one of its short-lived restorations, the Jesuit Province of Spain was asked by Queen Isabella II to return to the Philippines to undertake, or rather to resume the evangelization of Mindanao and Sulu. The Spanish Jesuits accepted the commission, along with the attached condition that they would not try to recover any of the property confiscated by the government from the Old Society. On 4 February 1859, six priests and four brothers under the leadership of Father Jose Fernandez Cuevas set sail from Cadiz for Manila. They landed on 14 April, being received with great charity by the Augustinians, who had them stay in their house at Guadalupe until they could set up for themselves.

A grant from the government enabled them to purchase a house at the corner of Anda and Arzobispo streets in the walled city, and this became and remained the central residence of the Philippine Mission until it was destroyed in the recapture of Manila by the American forces in 1945.

THE ESCUELA MUNICIPAL

Soon after the Jesuits' arrival, the city council of Manila put in a request that they take charge of the Escuela Municipal, a public primary school for boys. Father Cuevas at first refused on the plea that his orders were only to take charge of the Mindanao missions; but Governor Norzagaray finally persuaded him to accept by taking the responsibility of explaining the step to the home government.

On 10 December 1859, Don Lorenzo Moreno Conde, the schoolmaster then in charge of the Escuela Municipal, formally handed it over to the new Jesuit faculty, consisting of Father José Ignacio Guerrico, prefect of studies, Fathers Pascual Barrado and Ramón Barúa, teachers, and Brother Venancio Belzunce, prefect of discipline. They found that there were 33 boys registered but only 23 in actual attendance. Nine days later they moved the school to a building across Anda Street from the mission house; by that time the enrollment had risen to 76. On 2 January 1860 it stood at 120 and the following March at 170. The school closed at the end of June and reopened in August with an enrollment of 210.

It should be noted that the Escuela Municipal was a public school primarily for Spanish boys, since the city council which supported it represented at that time the Spanish residents of Manila. However, the Jesuits from the very beginning of their administration opened the school to Filipinos and boys of other nationalities,

so that by the end of the nineteenth century, nine-tenths of the student body were Filipinos or *mestizos*.

THE ATENEO MUNICIPAL DE MANILA

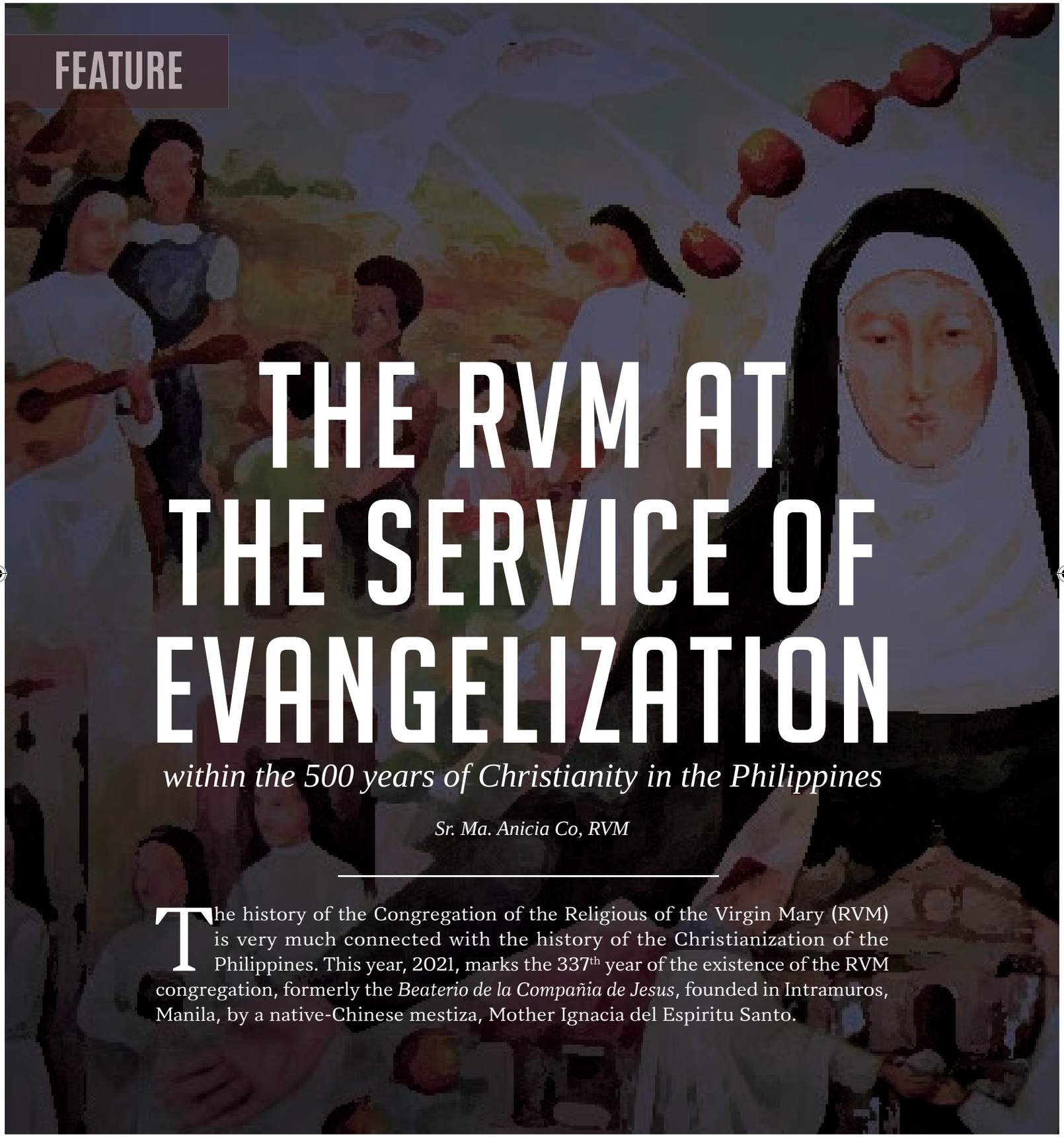
In 1862, the city council of Manila, pleased with the way the school was being conducted, invited Father Cuevas to submit a plan for its expansion to a school of secondary instruction. Two years later he did so. The plan, modelled on that already in operation in Cuba, called for a modification of the last two grades of the existing five-grade curriculum and the addition of three more years. Latin and Greek grammar would be added to the subjects of the *superior* and *supremo* grades, while the additional years would be devoted to the standard "college-level" subjects of the Jesuit system, namely, poetry, rhetoric and philosophy. Thus, the original five grades would be preserved as a terminal course for those who did not intend to make any further studies, while boys preparing for university studies would be ready for them upon the completion of the entire eight-year curriculum. The plan met with the government's approval and went into effect in 1865. To fit its new status, the name of the school was changed to Ateneo Municipal de Manila.

That same year, the acquisition of additional property in the same block enabled the Ateneo to offer boarding facilities. In 1870, the first ten students to complete the secondary curriculum received the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Two years later, a new boy entered who was later to make history: Jose Rizal.





FEATURE

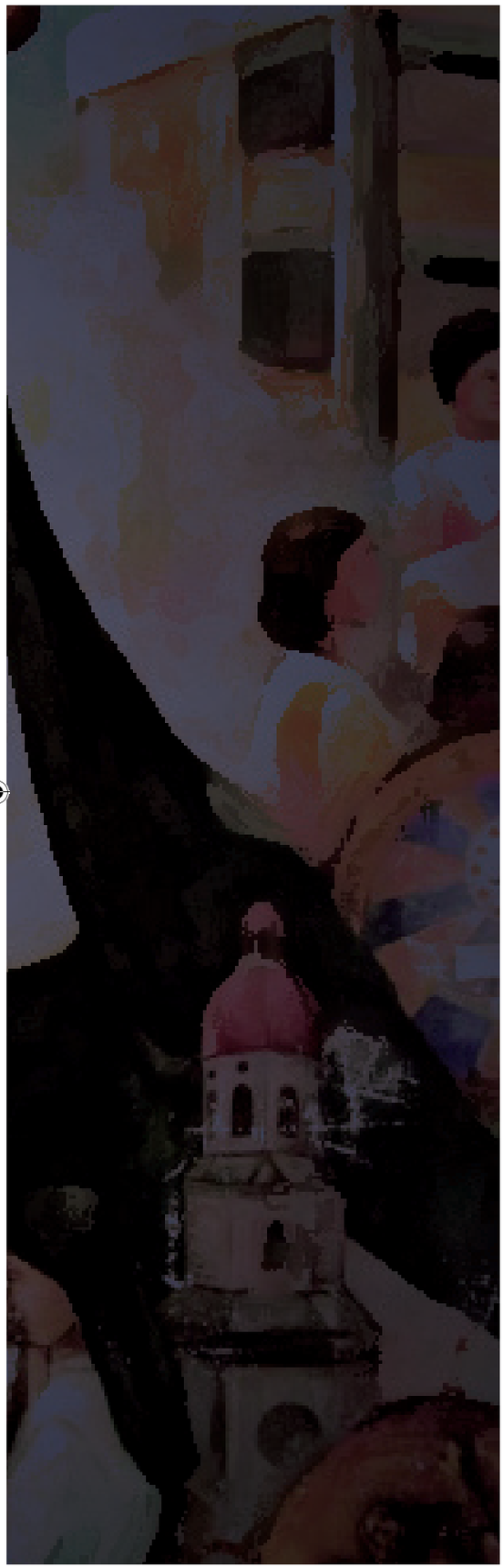


THE RVM AT THE SERVICE OF EVANGELIZATION

within the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines

Sr. Ma. Anicia Co, RVM

The history of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) is very much connected with the history of the Christianization of the Philippines. This year, 2021, marks the 337th year of the existence of the RVM congregation, formerly the *Beaterio de la Compañia de Jesus*, founded in Intramuros, Manila, by a native-Chinese mestiza, Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo.



MOTHER IGNACIA DEL ESPIRITU SANTO (1663-1748) AND THE *BEATERIO DE LA COMPAÑÍA DE JESÚS*

The foundress of the Religious of the Virgin Mary, Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, was born, lived, and died during the Spanish colonial era in the Philippines. The few primary sources and historical documents available yield enough information to reconstruct the story of Mother Ignacia and the community she founded, the *Beaterio de la Compañía de Jesús* (hereinafter, the Beaterio), now known as the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary.

The precise date of her birth is not known, but her baptismal record shows the date and place of her baptism, the name of her parents and godparent, and the priest who baptized her. Her parents were Jusepe Iuco, a Chinese convert to Catholicism in 1652, and Maria Jeronima, a native. They were residents of Binondo, the place where the Chinese Catholics were settled by the Spaniards to separate them from the non-Catholic Chinese. Because of the threat of the invasion by the Chinese pirates in 1662, the church in Binondo was demolished, together with the other stone structures, convents and churches in Manila upon the order of the Spanish Governor General so that they could not be used as bastion of defense or offense by the Chinese pirates in case of attack. Thus, Jusepe and Maria Jeronima brought their first child to the Holy Kings Church in Parian where she received the sacrament of baptism from Fray Alberto Collares, OP. At her baptism, she was given the name Ignacia del Espiritu Santo. The significance of this name would become manifest in the course of her life.

The historical context in which Ignacia grew up was characterized by conflicts and discrimination. Every now and then, there were conflicts between the governor-general and the archbishop, and some conflicts among the religious orders. The society which Ignacia knew was a colonial pyramid. At the top of the society were the Spaniards who came to the country from Spain (the *peninsulares*). They considered themselves to be the legitimate inhabitants of the islands and held top government positions. Next in rank were the Spaniards born in the islands (*insulares* or creoles). They belonged to the ruling class but were also discriminated against by the *peninsulares*. Below these ranks were the half-breeds (*mestizos/mestizas*) and the natives (*yndios/yndias*). As a Chinese-*yndia mestiza*, Ignacia became aware of the ambivalent attitude of the Spaniards toward the Chinese. They praised the Chinese for their industry and contribution to the economy but treated them with suspicion and taxed them heavily. The natives, on the other hand, were engaged to work for the Spaniards and their interests. Some were subjected to forced labor in the shipyard of Cavite and other places as well. Others were recruited as sailors and trained to fight with the Spaniards against any invading force. The roles of men and women in the society were delineated. For women and girls, social acceptability meant developing characteristics of shyness, discretion, restraint, and timidity.

Ignacia grew up as an only child from age six because her siblings, Rafaela, Santiago, and Juana dela Concepcion all died in infancy. She learned her first prayers from her mother who also taught her the basic tenets of the Catholic faith and the practice of Christian piety. Her faith was nurtured in the family. With her parents, Ignacia followed the practices of piety common during her time: praying the rosary and other devotions, particularly devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary, joining processions, assisting at Mass, receiving Holy Communion and going to confession.



Like the other native and mestizo/mestiza children, Ignacia received education in the parish which was mostly doctrinal. Although there were already two educational institutions for women and girls, Sta. Potenciana established in 1595 and Sta. Isabel in 1632, these were reserved for Spanish girls and women.

In 1684, when Ignacia was 21 years old, her parents wanted her to marry. She felt there could be another way of life for her. She desired to dedicate her whole life to God. Torn between the desire to please her parents and to follow the stirrings deep within her heart, she went to make a general confession and seek the advice of Fr. Paul Klein, a Jesuit priest from Bohemia who arrived in Manila in 1682 and became known by his hispanized name Pablo Clain (1650-1717). Fr. Clain gave her the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola to help her discern the will of God for her. After this retreat, she went home to tell her parents about her decision "to remain in the service of the Divine Majesty and live by the sweat of her brow."

She left home, supported herself by needlework, and lived a life of prayer and penance in the house located at the back of the Jesuit College of Manila. Mother Ignacia centered her life on the suffering Christ and tried to imitate him through a life of service and humility. She prayed earnestly to God and performed penances to move God to have mercy on people. Her spirituality of humble service was expressed in her capacity to forgive, to bear wrongs patiently, and to correct with gentleness and meekness. This spirituality was manifest in peace and harmony in the community, mutual love and union of wills, witnessing to the love of Christ and the maternal care of the Blessed Mother.

Her life of prayer and labor attracted other native women who also felt called to the religious life but could not be admitted into the existing congregation at that time which admitted only Spanish women. Mother Ignacia accepted these women into her company, and the first community was born. They became known as the *Beatas de la Compañía de Jesús*, because they frequently received the sacraments at the Church of St. Ignatius, performed many acts of devotion there, and had the Jesuit Fathers for their spiritual directors and confessors.

As they grew in number, they felt the need for a more stable lifestyle and a set of rules. They set down in writing their community practices and drew up their daily schedule. Mother Ignacia and her companions were involved in retreat work and helped the Jesuit Fathers by preparing the retreatants to be disposed to the Spiritual Exercises. They also admitted young girls as boarders and taught them Christian doctrine, reading and writing, as well as sewing and household arts and skills. Mother Ignacia did not make any distinction of color or race but admitted *yndias*, *mestizas* and Spanish girls to be educated in the Beaterio. She also opened the Beaterio to women, even Spanish women, who wanted a place of solitude and stay as *recogidas*. The *beatas* became known for their devotion, humility, application to work, and the spiritual exercises.

Encouraged and assisted by the Jesuit Fathers, Mother Ignacia finally completed the writing of the rules of the Beaterio which defined their group as a community of religious women. Their rule of life was based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola and inspired by the spirit and example of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mother Ignacia submitted these Rules to the archdiocesan office. With the Archdiocese being *sede vacante*, the fiscal provisor approved the Rules in 1732. Sometime after, probably in 1737, Mother Ignacia requested to be relieved of her position as Rectora and the leadership passed on to Sor Dominga del Rosario.



The community observed the process of electing the Rectora as provided for in the 1726 Constitutions and Rules. The Beaterio of Mother Ignacia will go down in history as the first group of Filipinos to exercise the right of suffrage through secret ballot.

Mother Ignacia lived the rest of her life in the Beaterio as an ordinary member without seeking honor or privilege as the foundress of the community. Jesuit Fr. Murillo Velarde saw in this act of relinquishing her position of Superior of the house a sign of her great humility. Mother Ignacia did not cling to power and privilege. All she wanted was to love God in humble service. Murillo Velarde described her as "so humble... a truly strong woman.... mortified, patient, devout, spiritual, zealous for the good of souls."

Two months before Mother Ignacia's death, the Archbishop initiated a process of securing the royal protection for the Beaterio. The Archbishop wrote his letter to the King based on the report of the visitation of the Beaterio. The letter reached Spain only two years after.

On September 10, 1748, Mother Ignacia died without knowing the response of the Spanish king to the petition of the Archbishop. But she left behind a community that was in expectant hope for what the future might hold for them, trusting always in God's providence as Mother Ignacia taught them by example. Murillo Velarde observed the honor and acknowledgment given to Mother Ignacia by the the civil and church leaders who carried her coffin during her funeral.

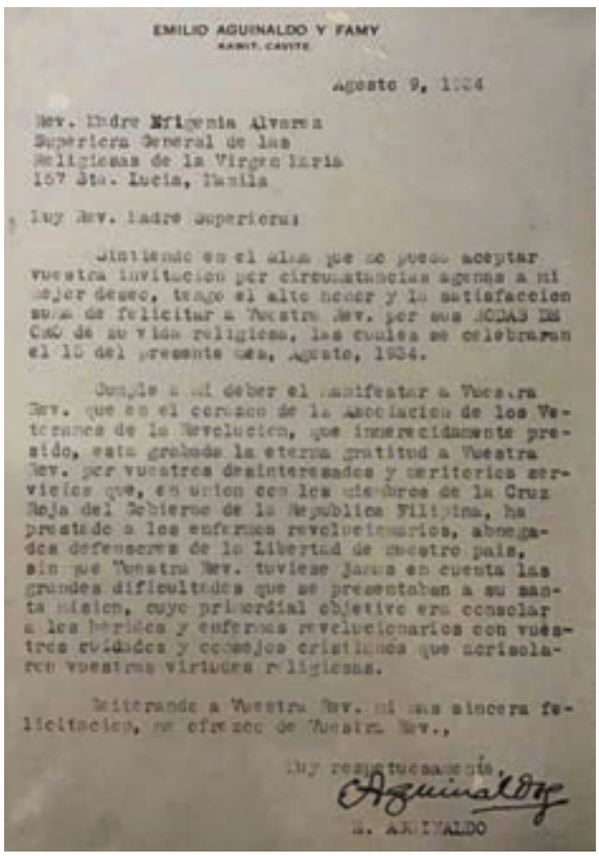
THE *BEATERIO DE LA COMPAÑÍA DE JESÚS*: SURVIVAL, CHALLENGES, AND DEVELOPMENTS (1748-1898)

Seven years after the death of Mother Ignacia, the Beaterio learned from the Archbishop the response of the King of Spain to his letter. King Ferdinand VI's decree of royal protection dated November 25, 1755 officially acknowledged the Beaterio but explicitly defined it as a secular association. The King ordained that the house "or Beaterio of native women continue to enjoy its present status supporting itself... without, however, becoming a convent or a foundation, but only a house of retreat exempt from cloister... said women and other persons living with them in the house are not to be molested in the practice of their pious exercises." The decree ensured the safety of the residents of the Beaterio, but it denied the nature of the Beaterio as a community of religious women. A year later, the King required a report on the statutes of the Beaterio. The royal *cedula* of 1761 ordered the Beaterio to be placed under the direct supervision of the governor-general, and to formulate a new constitution that would define it as a secular institution. The Jesuit Provincial, who was asked to assist the beatas in formulating the new constitutions, clarified that the Jesuits did not exercise any authority over these beatas who "are seculars" and "their voluntary pronouncement of the simple vows as approved by their confessors does not violate the law." What the beatas did was simply to mark with asterisks the numbers in the 1726 Constitutions and Rules that the King ordered to be deleted. Even without being recognized as religious women, the beatas continued to live the religious life according to the spirit and charism of Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo.

When the Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines, the beatas lost their spiritual Fathers, directors and confessors. The 1767 decree of King Charles II of Spain ordering the expulsion of the Jesuits from all his dominions including the Philippines was immediately executed when it reached the Philippines in 1768. Thus, from 1768 until the return of the Jesuits to the Philippines in 1859, the Beaterio thrived on its own and continued the retreat work even without the Jesuit priests. The beatas were not totally without any support because they enjoyed the solicitude of the Archbishop and other churchmen who helped and supported them even in their retreat works. The beatas carried on the education and formation of young girls in the Beaterio and offered hospitality to women who wanted a temporary place of seclusion and solitude.

Even with these apostolic works, the Beaterio had to deal with the demand of the King to keep them from developing as a religious community. In order to satisfy the king, the beatas produced in 1795 a copy of their constitutions with a note "*expurgado segun el edicto de 1747*" on its cover. The 1795 Constitutions, however, was exactly the same as the 1726 Constitutions and Rules of Mother Ignacia. The numbers that indicated the religious character of the Beaterio were not deleted but only marked with asterisks.





EMILIO AGUINALDO Y FAMY
KAWIT, CAVITE

Agosto 9, 1934

Rev. Madre Eligenia Alvarez
Superiora General de las
Religiosas de la Virgen Maria
157 Sto. Lucia, Manila

Muy Rev. Madre Superiora:

Sintiendo en el alma que no pueda aceptar vuestra invitacion por circunstancias agenas a mi mejor deseo, tengo el alto honor y la satisfaccion suma de felicitar a Vuestra Rev. por sus BODAS DE Oro de su vida religiosa, las cuales se celebraran el 15 del presente mes, Agosto, 1934.

Cumple a mi deber el manifestar a Vuestra Rev. que en el corazon de la Asociacion de los Veteranos de la Revolucion, que inmerecidamente presido, esta grabada la eterna gratitud a Vuestra Rev. por vuestros desinteresados y meritorios servicios que, en union con los miembros de la Cruz Roja del Gobierno de la Republica Filipina, ha prestado a los enfermos revolucionarios, abnegados defensores de la libertad de nuestro pais, sin que Vuestra Rev. tuviese jamas en cuenta las grandes dificultades que se presentaban a su santa mision, cuyo primordial objetivo era consolar a los heridos y enfermos revolucionarios con vuestros consejos cristianos que acrisolaron vuestras virtudes religiosas.

Reiterando a Vuestra Rev. mi mas sincera felicitacion, me ofrezco de Vuestra Rev.,

Muy respetuosamente,
Aguinaldo
E. AGUINALDO

The succeeding Rectoras of the Beaterio were keen in insuring that the Beaterio retain its original nature according to the spirit and vision of Mother Ignacia. The continuing support of the Archbishop who did not fail to send a delegate to preside over the election of the Rectoras of the Beaterio and to make the necessary appointments of officials when the need arose was a tacit approval and recognition of the nature and importance of this Beaterio.

The Beaterio which reached its 166 years of existence since its foundation was recognized as a teaching institution in 1850's *Buzeta's Diccionario Geografico, Estadistico, Historico de las Islas Filipinas* and in the weekly publication, *La Ilustracion Filipina*, in 1860. Its September issues featured the Beaterio of Mother Ignacia among the *Beaterios de Manila* under the title "*Educandas del Beaterio*." The beatas managed to keep the retreat movement going by inviting available priests to give the retreat and helping in explaining the points and translating them for the native women.

In 1874, about 15 years after the return of the Jesuits to the Philippines, the Jesuits, who were given the Mindanao missions and had already ransomed slave children in Tamontaca, appealed to the Beaterio for help to take care of the girls. Three *recogidas* volunteered to go to the missions. They begged the Rectora to be invested with the holy habit and the grace to be missionaries in Mindanao. These three became the first missionaries of the Beaterio of Mother Ignacia. They were given charge of the girls in Tamontaca, Cotabato, while the Jesuits took care of the boys. The beatas taught reading and writing as well as household arts of sewing, washing, and ironing clothes, even farming. The spiritual and religious formation of the beatas was taken care of by the Jesuits.

The missionary life of the beatas in Tamontaca inspired some beatas in Manila to volunteer for the Mindanao missions. Soon beaterios were opened

in places where the Jesuits had their missions, in Dapitan, Dipolog, Zamboanga, and Butuan (1880-96). The beatas distinguished themselves in educating young girls and pioneered the retreat movement in these areas.

The rise of the mission beaterios in Mindanao posed a problem to the Beaterio in Manila. When an article was published in *La Ilustracion Filipina* in 1893 that featured Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo and the work of the beatas in Manila and in Mindanao, the status of the Beaterio in Manila was questioned. Since it was not canonically a religious institute, it could not have daughter foundations. The matter was resolved by requiring the beatas going to the Mindanao mission to renounce their membership to the Beaterio in Manila. The beaterios in Tamontaca and Dapitan were to be independent beaterios and were allowed to admit novices and train them for religious profession of vows. Even with these conditions, some beatas from Manila still volunteered to go to Mindanao. They renounced their membership to the Manila Beaterio and the right to return to it.

At the outbreak of the Philippine revolution against Spain in 1896, the beatas in Manila saw the danger of their staying in the Beaterio. The former Jesuit establishment across the street had become



a Spanish barracks since the Jesuit expulsion. Only in 1898, when the American forces arrived, did the beatas evacuate the Beaterio upon the order of the Archbishop. The beatas moved to Malabon, then to Paombong and Hagonoy. Wherever they went, they gathered the little children and taught them.

Some of the beatas went along with General Emilio Aguinaldo's army and ministered to the wounded soldiers. They not only acted as nurses but also gave good counsel and encouragement to the soldiers. For these services, General Aguinaldo expressed his immense gratitude to the Beaterio when the war was over.

The mission beaterios of Mother Ignacia were the way to the fulfilment of the dreams of native women long before Ignacia was born. Clara and Isabel Caliman of Butuan and Maria Uray of Dapitan wished to belong to a religious community of women, but they did not have that opportunity. They lived and died as solitary beatas.

The troubled times did not prevent the beatas from carrying out their mission of sharing their faith not only by teaching children and helping in retreats but also by nursing the sick and wounded and giving consolation to people who were in sorrow and affliction. The beatas also became part of the shaping of the Filipino identity.

FROM BEATERIO TO CONGREGATION (1899-1948)

When the lives of the Jesuit missionaries and the beatas were endangered because of the coming of the revolutionaries from Manila, the Jesuits decided to evacuate the beatas and the children from Tamontaca. The children were distributed to some families, and the beatas of Tamontaca, Zamboanga, and Dapitan, together with the Jesuit missionaries, sailed to Manila in 1899. Upon the request of the Jesuit Superior of the Mindanao mission, the Archbishop allowed the Mindanao beatas to occupy the Beaterio which was turned into a hospital by the Spaniards and was now taken over by the American army. In 1900, when the Manila beatas who evacuated the Beaterio returned, they were surprised to see the Mindanao beatas there.



The end of the Spanish colonial rule and its *Patronato Real* meant the freedom of the Beaterio of Mother Ignacia to live its true identity as a religious community willed by God to be at the service of the mission of the Church. The beatas petitioned the Archbishop for the reorganization of the Beaterio and the return of the Jesuit spiritual direction. Approving both requests, the Archbishop recommended the revision of the constitutions to include provisions that would respond to the situation. With the permission to profess the vow of poverty, the dream of Mother Ignacia for the Beaterio to be recognized as a religious community was fulfilled.

The first general congregation held in 1902 elected the first Superior General Mother Maria Efigenia Alvarez and the members of her council. The revised constitutions were submitted to the Archbishop with a request for assistance to have the Beaterio recognized as a congregation by the Holy See. The congregation was canonically erected on July 31, 1906, and received the decree of praise from Pope Pius X on March 17, 1907. This was the first recognition by the Holy See of the religious community founded by Mother Ignacia. The Sisters complied with the required reviews and revisions of the constitutions, and on March 24, 1931, the Congregation received the decree of approbation from Pope Pius XI. From *Beaterio de la Compañia de Jesus*, the name was changed to *Compañia de las Beatas de la Virgen Maria* and to *Congregacion de Religiosas de la Virgen Maria* in 1932.

As the Congregation was undergoing the process of becoming a pontifical institute, it continued to expand its apostolic endeavors. The missions in Mindanao were incorporated into the Congregation's mission after the reorganization. Sisters were sent to the missions established before the Philippine Revolution, and new mission houses and schools were opened not only in different parts of Mindanao but also in Manila, Bulacan, Pampanga, Cavite, and Laguna. As the missions of the Congregation expanded, the school of the Beaterio in Manila which became known as the *Colegio del Beaterio* was formally incorporated in 1912. The *Colegio* upgraded its facilities and curriculum. The name was changed to St. Mary's College in 1939. The elementary and secondary courses of the Beaterio were formally recognized. The Junior Normal College was opened to prepare the Sisters for the teaching apostolate.


UNA RELIGIOSA QUE SIRVE A LA PATRIA EN LA GUERRA Y EN LA PAZ

VALOR Y ABNEGACIO

With the opening of new houses and schools from 1920 to 1930, the Congregation established itself and became known as a teaching congregation. It still continued its dormitory ministry and by 1930 it had three dormitories, one in Cebu and two in Manila. The Sisters continued the Congregation's retreat apostolate and catechetical ministry.

The Second World War (1941-1945) posed another challenge to the Congregation. Classes were suspended, schools were closed in Manila and different parts of the country. The Sisters had to evacuate Intramuros. This time there would be no more possibility of returning. The buildings were razed to the ground during the liberation of Manila in 1945. The lot in Quezon City which was acquired for the Novitiate in 1939 became the new Mother House of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary.

The Sisters reopened the schools and accepted new missions from 1946 to 1948. Even with the needed repairs of school buildings and upgrade of facilities as well as financial constraints, the Sisters managed to continue their apostolic works.

On January 12, 1948, with the definitive approbation of its constitutions, the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) received the distinction of being an apostolic institute of pontifical right. Two hundred years after the death of Mother Ignacia, the Beaterio she founded was officially recognized by the Church as a community of religious women.



FROM AN ALL-FILIPINO CONGREGATION TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATION (1948-2020)

By the grace of God, the Sisters were able to pursue their mission of evangelization despite the many challenges of the postwar era. As the Congregation accepted new invitations to run schools in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, it also continued its retreat and dormitory apostolates and allowed Sisters to work in hospitals to care for the sick.

The Congregation kept abreast with the changing times and implemented the renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council. This meant another review and revision of the Constitutions based on the original spirit of the foundation of Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church, and the needs of the times. The Sisters took to heart the spirit of renewal of Vatican II.

Besides retreat, education, and dormitory, the Congregation organized and accepted new types of ministries. The Social Action Ministry was organized in 1972. Later on, the different social action programs were integrated in the school's community involvement programs even as the social ministry continued to have its own thrust. The Congregation sent Sisters to respond to the needs of the Church through various forms of services, in the seminary apostolate, diocesan catechetical centers, bishops' residence, in EAPI, CBCP, PMAS, diocesan finance offices, Cebu Caritas, Archdiocesan Archives, nunciatures, teaching in schools of theology, and administrative work in diocesan schools. These were grouped together as the Special Ministry of the Congregation.

The Congregation also responded to the call for overseas mission. The first RVM missions outside the Philippines were opened in Sacramento, California (1959), Honolulu, Hawaii (1971), and Indonesia (1977). Several mission houses were started in Papua New Guinea (1980), Rome (1980), and Ghana, West Africa (1982). Other foundations included Islamabad, Pakistan (1992), Canada (1994), Pago Pago, American Samoa (1995), and Taiwan (1996). From 2009 to 2020 new communities were established in Rome and in Canada.

Today, the RVMs serve God in different fields of apostolate (schools, dormitories, retreats, seminaries, social ministry, formation and special ministry) in several parts of the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Ghana, West Africa, Rome, Canada, and the United States. Education is their main apostolate. The RVMs manage 50 schools and 2 affiliate schools in the Philippines, 8 schools and 10 affiliate schools in the overseas missions. They also serve through the dormitory and retreat apostolate and are strengthening their social and pastoral ministries. Through the Special Ministry, the Congregation serves in various capacities according to the needs of the Church.

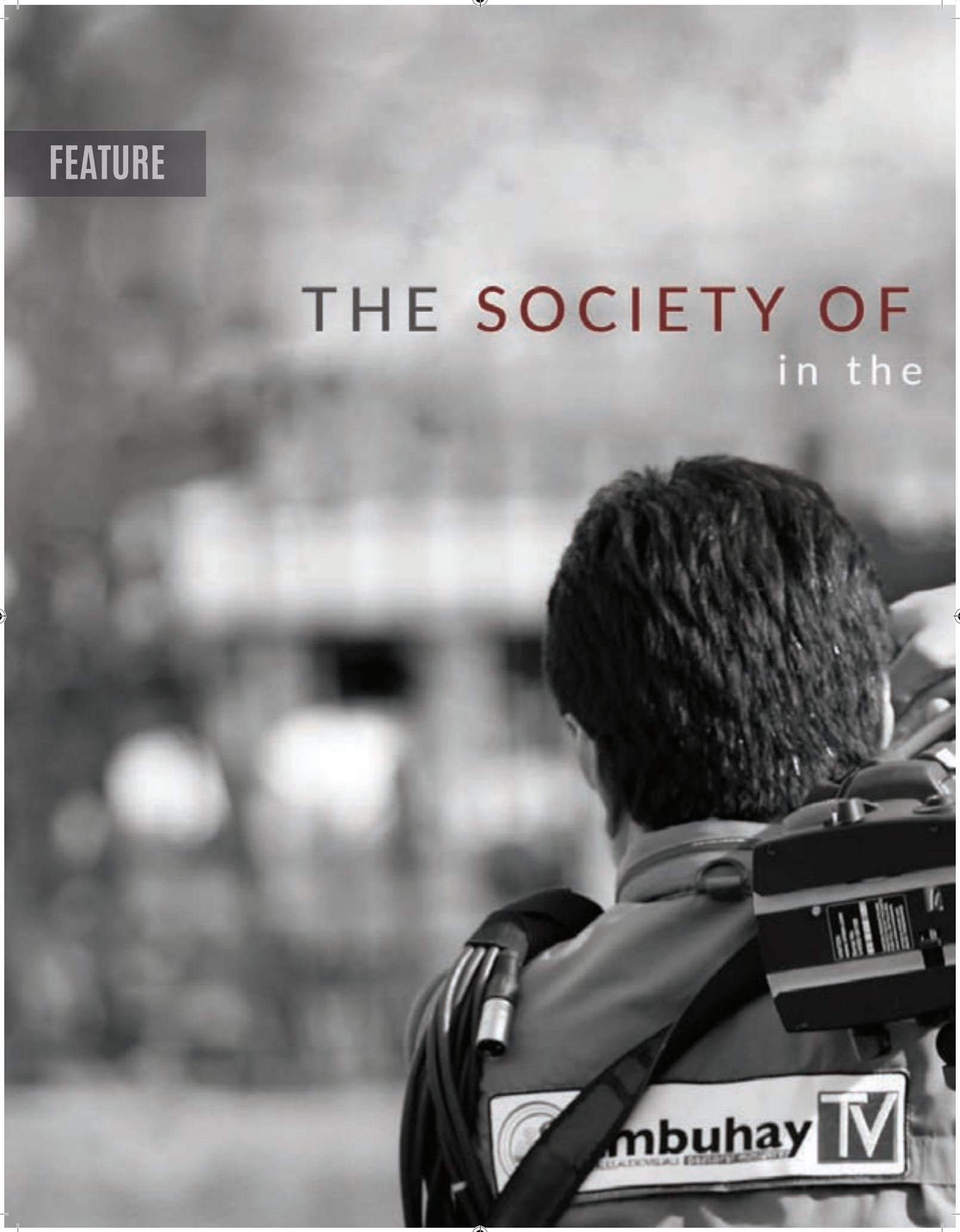
The growth of the Beaterio into a Congregation and its response to the apostolic challenges of the times show the vitality of the spirit of Mother Ignacia. Indeed, her lamp continues to shine as her daughters courageously strive to respond with zeal to the call of mission in different contexts.

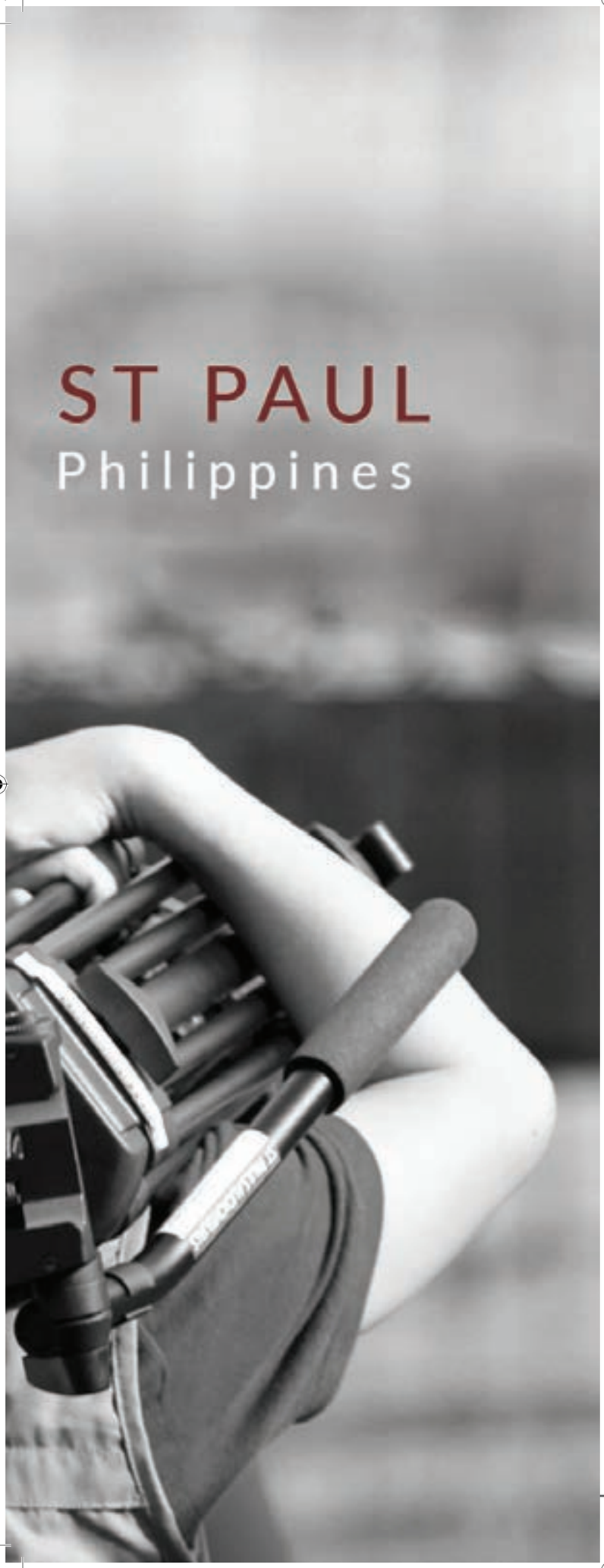
The story of the Congregation that has grown from the small Beaterio of Mother Ignacia continues to unfold. It bears witness to the enduring vitality and strength of the foundation, the spirituality of Mother Ignacia. The lamp she lit to guide the path of native women aspiring to religious life and the maturity of faith continues to shine. It remains undimmed.



FEATURE

THE SOCIETY OF
in the





The Society of Saint Paul (SSP) is a religious Congregation founded in 1914 by Blessed James Alberione in Alba, Italy. The Society of St. Paul is the first branch of the Pauline Family which consists of five religious congregations (Society of St. Paul, Daughters of St. Paul, Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd, Sisters of Mary Queen of Apostles), four consecrated secular institutes (Institute of Our Lady of the Annunciation, Institute of St. Gabriel the Archangel, Institute of the Holy Family, and Institute of Jesus the Priest), and the Association of Pauline Cooperators. The Society of St. Paul is altrice or "nourisher" of the Pauline Family and acts as the "elder" brother of the feminine congregations, offering especially its priestly ministry.

On the night that divided the 19th century from the 20th, James Alberione, a young seminarian, received a particular light to do something for the people of the new century. He felt obliged to serve the Church and to work with others in an organized way. That inspiration was vital for the specific mission and spirit of the Pauline Family. At first, he thought of a Catholic organization of writers, technicians, and propagandists to whom he would give direction, work, and spirit. But towards 1910, in a greater light, he became convinced that these writers, technicians, and propagandists should be men and women religious to give the mission more cohesion, stability, continuity, and a greater supernatural sense in the apostolate. This inspiration from the Lord became a concrete realization on August 20,1914, when, amid the destruction and calamity of the First World War, Fr. Alberione officially started the congregation. It received from Monsignor Giuseppe Re, the Bishop of Alba, the diocesan approval on December 3, 1927. The Holy See officially approved the Congregation on June 27, 1949.

The Society of St. Paul was born with the specific charism to spread Christian message and values through the means of communication. Fr. Alberione began the Typography School of Little Workers (later, Society of St. Paul) with a few boys (the first vocations to the Society of St. Paul) and a small printing machine. The apostolate that was known at the beginning as apostolate of the press grew to become publishing apostolate. As time went by, it became apostolate of the editions that includes audio-video products and the use of the latest and fastest means of communication. Printing press, radio, TV station, and cinema production houses became part of the apostolate of the Society of St Paul.

The Society of St. Paul has a specific spirituality based on Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life (cf. Jn 14:6). Fr. Alberione presents this spirituality as an integral method that helps the holistic growth of every Pauline and everyone who lives by this devotion. In the Society of St. Paul, Mary is venerated under the title Queen of Apostles. The spirit of the Congregation and of every member comes from St. Paul. Fr. Alberione considers St. Paul as Patron, Protector, Model, Teacher, Father, and Founder of the Congregation.

ARRIVAL IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Congregation that had a humble beginning in Alba started to spread in Italy and to other parts of the world. On July 7, 1935, Frs. Marco Grossi, Bernardo Borgogno, and Clemente Canavero arrived in the Philippines. However, Fr. Canavero, after a brief stay in the Philippines, left for Nanking, China.

The Apostolic Delegate in Manila, Msgr. William Piani, who had requested Fr. Alberione for the SSP's presence in the Philippines, invited the Pauline Fathers to stay temporarily at the Apostolic Nuncio's place along Taft Avenue, Manila. As they found it hard to open a house in Manila, they traveled southward to Lipa in Batangas where they were warmly





welcomed by Msgr. Alfredo Verzosa, Bishop of Lipa, who even loaned them a house that would become their residence, and in a part of the house a small printing press was set up. The pioneers started purchasing secondhand printing machines. Their presence was augmented with the arrival of Frs. Isidoro Selvo, Jerome Casolari, and Bro. Gregory. It was during this period that local vocations started to arrive.

IN MANILA AT THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

Through the help of the Apostolic Delegate, the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Michael O'Doherty, granted the permission for the SSP Fathers to transfer to Manila, on condition that they take care of a parish. A lot was purchased along F.B. Harrison Street in Pasay, and a temporary chapel was constructed. On August 10, 1941, the SSP in Lipa moved to Pasay.

The Paulines had not yet firmly settled in Pasay when World War II broke out. All the Italian Fathers and Brothers were arrested by the Japanese, transported to Batangas, and thrown into jail. The aspirants who had joined earlier were sent back to their families except for Marcelino Punto. Later, the Paulines were set free and transported back to Pasay where they were forced to share their house with the Japanese soldiers who transformed it into barracks and repair depot for their war machines. The Paulines suffered hunger, hardships, and threats to their lives while taking care of the parishioners and providing for their own sustenance. The worst disaster and loss came when the American liberators bombarded Manila and nearby areas. The Japanese, while retreating, destroyed and razed to the ground the church, the printing press, and the house. A kindhearted American Army commander told the Paulines to evacuate to Batangas, and they stayed there for three weeks, after which they returned to Pasay.

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The Paulines started the work of reconstruction, including the church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. The rebuilding was completed in 1951.

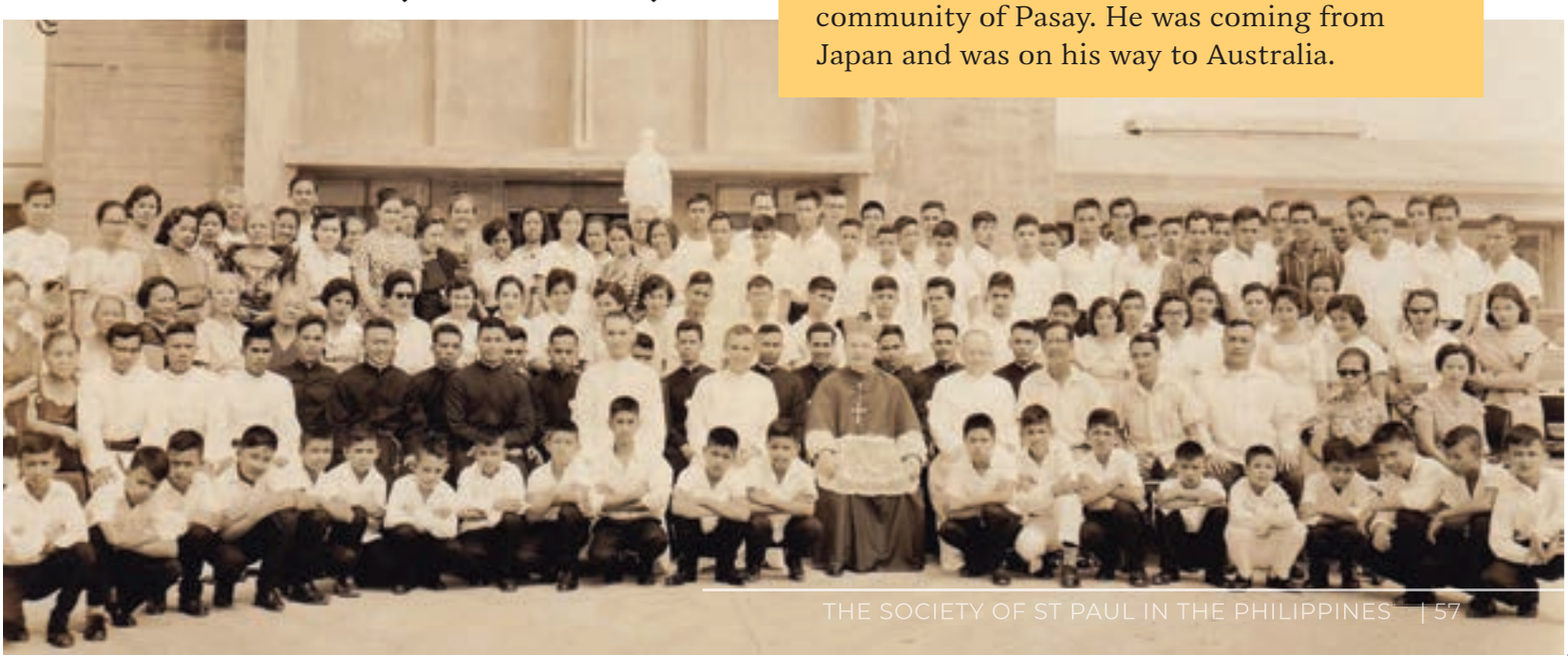
On December 16, 1951, the first Filipino priests — Frs. Moises Pascual Leviste and Francisco Joseph Villena — were ordained by the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Gabriel Reyes. A year before their ordination to the priesthood, the pioneering Brother, Marcelino John Punto, made his perpetual Religious Profession.

The *Libreria San Pablo* bookstore was built near the newly reconstructed church, and this bookstore served as outlet for the printing apostolate.

RENEWED MISSIONARY IMPETUS

When the Society of St. Paul celebrated its 40th foundation anniversary worldwide in 1954, the local community of Pasay was composed of nine priests, four religious brothers, ten novices, 20 aspirants to the brotherhood, and 60 students to the priesthood. In September of that year, the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Rufino J. Santos, opened the *Voice of St. Paul* over DZBB. The program was aired every Sunday at 2:00 PM by the SSP members.

On May 21, 1955, Fr. Alberione came to the Philippines and paid a short visit to the community of Pasay. He was coming from Japan and was on his way to Australia.



Another apostolic activity that came to life at this time was *St. Paul Films* for the diffusion of 16-mm films promoting Christian values.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MAKATI AND ARRIVAL OF MORE PAULINES

The house in Pasay had grown small with the ever-increasing number of those in formation. For the need of the growing community and the expansion of the apostolate, a lot in Makati was acquired from the Ayala Corporation in 1955. On this 4-hectare property, the *Queen of Apostles Seminary* was built which became the residence of the aspirants, the novices, and professed members. A part of the ground floor was converted into a printing press. The Seminary was inaugurated and blessed by Rufino Cardinal Santos on August 20, 1960. The Makati community now became the hub of the SSP. Some members remained in Pasay City to continue with the administration and ministerial services of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish (OLSP).

Meanwhile, the clerics aspiring for the priesthood were sent to the *Pauline International College* in Rome, joining SSP clerics from other countries. On their return, they would strengthen the community. Frs. Ledio Peter Barisoro and Romeo Henry Hitosis were ordained in Rome on July 7, 1963; Frs. Josefino Javellana and Arthur Palisada on June 30, 1968. Then there was the group of the "four evangelists": Frs. Andres Mark Arboleda, Fruto Matthew Rosales, Felino Luke Quitalig, and Ramon John Manalo who were ordained by Pope Paul VI at St. Peter's Basilica on May 17, 1970. Fr. Manuel Linterna was the last of the Filipinos ordained in Rome in 1974.



More Italian missionaries came to augment the community, notably Fr. Leonardo Zega who edited *Home Life* magazine; Fr. Luigi Zanoni who succeeded the Founder as Superior General and who later chose to stay in the Philippines; Fr. Pietro Campus who would become Superior General from 1998 to 2016; and Bro. Adriano Banfi who managed the printing press and would be the last Italian missionary to the country.

The continued increase in vocations and the acquisition of printing machines prompted the construction of a separate building for the printing press in 1967, aptly named *St. Joseph's House*. Also rising in Makati were a three-story residence for the professed members and the *Libreria San Pablo*.

GROWTH AND ORDINATIONS IN THE 70'S AND 80'S

After Fr. Manuel Linterna, candidates to the priesthood were no longer sent to Rome for their theological studies. They took up Theology at San Carlos Seminary in Guadalupe, Makati; Maryhill School of Theology and Loyola School of Theology in Quezon City; and Divine Word School of Theology in Tagaytay City.



In 1983, during the term of Fr. Felino Quitalig, the first Filipino major superior, the community that had been elevated to a Region acquired a lot in San Fernando, Pampanga, where the Novitiate House was built. The community also became the Mobile Diffusion sector that carried the Pauline products in nearby provinces in the Central Luzon area.

On March 7, 1987, the Province accepted the invitation of the Bishop of Macau and the recommendation of the General Government to have a presence in Macau, with the hope of setting foot in China. Frs. John Manalo and Edgar Pasporte, the pioneers, first stayed in Hong Kong for their language studies and later settled in Macau where they were joined by Fr. Albino Bento Pais, a Portuguese Pauline. Thus, the circumscription would become the Philippine-Macau Region. Unable to enter China, the missionaries continue to work under the Bishop of Macau.

The SSP Philippines-Macau Region became a Province with the appointment of Fr. Gil Alinsangan as Provincial Superior in 1990. In 1991, the SSP Province sold a part of the lot in Makati where the seminary building stood. The proceeds financed the transfer of St. Paul Seminary in Silang, Cavite, and the establishment of Pauline communities and diffusion centers in Cebu (May 29, 1991) and Cagayan de Oro (September 15, 1995).



The new St. Paul Seminary in Silang was blessed by the Superior General Fr. Silvio Pignotti on June 20, 1993. In Cebu, the SSP acquired a lot in Upon, Lapu-lapu City, and a complex was built. The Cagayan de Oro community was likewise established and served as the base of distribution in the northern Mindanao area.

Under Fr. Celso Godilano as Provincial Superior, the community of Iloilo was erected (August 20, 2000), becoming the center of apostolic activities in Western Visayas. Iloilo is the home province of many SSP members. On June 12, 2002, the Paulines set foot in southern Mindanao with the establishment of the community in Davao City.

FROM PRINTING TO PUBLISHING IN THE 90'S

Passing through the 90's, the Society of St. Paul underwent an important change of image – from Printer to Publisher. In 1991, the SSP General Government launched the use of the official trademark—St Pauls. It is the "corporate logo" used in all its circumscriptions all over the world. *Libreria San Pablo* became ST PAULS bookstore and *St. Paul Publications* became ST PAULS publishing.





For a long time, the Society of St. Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul have been using the same *stemma* or "trademark" that came from the Founder himself. But in 1991 the Society of St. Paul adopted a new logo as one single sign for all the activities of the Congregation, from books to audiovisuals. In two black lines, one descending and the other ascending, is depicted the salvific movement of the Word of God. The allusion to the transcendent Word of God is interpreted horizontally by the spiral which to a discerning eye appears like P, the first letter of "Paul," which is the key word of SSP institutional and apostolic identity. Moreover, the spiral expresses in its revolving style the fundamental prerogative of the Pauline mission, the universalism which characterizes the cosmic vocation of their apostolate.

The beginning of the 21st century ushered rapid changes in media culture with the advent of computers, cable TVs, and cellular phones. The demand for print media lessened drastically as the electronic media and information technology took the lead. St Pauls Philippines was organized as one apostolic entity and was tasked to consolidate all the phases of its operations, from the editorial, to production, to marketing, and to distribution/diffusion. The printing press in Makati was closed, and printing was outsourced to other printing plants in the country and abroad. More ST PAULS bookshops and outlets were added in the major cities in Metro Manila and other cities.

The SSP Philippine-Macau Province used to be known in the country through its printing services, books published under St Paul Publications, and two monthly magazines*: Home Life* for the family, and *The Youngster* for the youth. *Home Life's* section, *Dialogue with Father*, which was run by its long-time editor Fr. Andres Arboleda, Jr., was popular among readers. It ceased publication in 2006. *The Youngster,* subscribed mostly by Catholic schools, continues to this day.

The congregation would become more known through its Sunday missalette *Sambuhay* in both English and Filipino editions, started in 1987. On January 1, 2000, the Ilonggo version was added.

In line with the thrust of the 8th General Chapter (2004), St Pauls geared its apostolic projects towards the propagation of the Word of God, the Family, and Mass Media Culture. St Pauls obtained the rights to print and diffuse the Bibles in English (the *New American Bible*, the *Revised Standard Version*, and the *Pastoral Bible*) and, in tandem with the International Catholic Biblical Association in Rome, published the Bible in different Philippine languages: Pilipino, Ilonggo, Cebuano, Capampangan, and Binisaya of Samar-Leyte. Bible derivatives—*365 Days with the Lord*, *Simbahay* (Bible Diary in Tagalog), and *Pandasal* (Liturgical Prayers and Readings)—were started for study and meditation on the Word of God. These seasonal products are the mainstays of St Pauls.





STRAINING AHEAD

With younger members getting more inserted into its life and mission, the Philippine-Macau Province strains ahead to meet the challenges of the times. even if like the rest of the world, it is sorely tried by the pandemic COVID-19.

For the past decade, the Province has visibly inserted itself in the local Church through partnership with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the Archdiocese of Manila and other dioceses, and internationally with Vatican Radio (English). It had a media coverage of Pope Francis' visit to Tacloban City (January 17, 2015) and published the missalette for Pope Francis' Mass at the Luneta the following day. It also covered for the CBCP the International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu City (January 24-31, 2016).

In the biblical area, ST PAULS started the St. Paul National Bible Quiz (SPNBQ) in 2010 as part of the 75th anniversary celebration of the presence of SSP in the Philippines. The Bible Team would go to different regions of the country to organize the elimination round and the regional championship among high school students. The regional champions would then compete for the National Championship at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. On its 10th anniversary in 2019, SPNBQ drew 295 schools and 682 teams as participants. Due to the pandemic COVID-19, the SPNBQ has evolved into a weekly streamlined Bible challenge "Faith or Fake."

INTO THE WORLD OF THE DIGITAL

The pandemic COVID-19 has been a challenge to the creativity of the members to realign and produce more apostolic initiatives. *Sambuhay TV Mass* online has been addressing the needs of Filipino migrants and workers. It now regularly features Sunday and daily Masses for the homebound because of the corona virus. The same is done by *Sambuhay TV Mass sa Parokya*, livestreamed from the SSP Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Pasay City for its virtual parishioners and benefactors.

Other new or continuing digital initiatives are:

Sambuhay Interaktib, Aired every Monday and Wednesday. Online viewers receive inspiration and entertainment to help them through the Pandemic crisis and life challenges.

Dear Pablito, aired every Friday, 9 PM. Letter senders share their witness or experiences on how the Word of God has helped them grow.

Bless Me, Father, aired every Thursday. Practical spiritual pieces of advice are given by SSP priests to letter senders who share their problems.

Catholic Sync, a bi-monthly seminar serving as a supplement to *The Youngster* magazine. The topics of the webinar are in line with CEAP materials and K-12 curriculum.

Spotlight, an inspirational webinar where St Pauls authors and writers present their books.

Halo TV, a bi-monthly video on Bible stories for children, tied with *Halo* magazine.

Gabay Sambuhay, a liturgical catechesis video on the important seasons, feasts, solemnities, and celebrations of the liturgical year.

Sunset, Sunrise sa Parokya, an informal evening talk show on topics and issues, events and celebrations, Scriptures and Church teaching for virtual parishioners.

The Padscast is a weekly podscast hosted by two priests who share about finding meaning and joy in one's faith.









SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

St Paul Seminary in Silang, Cavite, is the formation house of the SSP aspirants. It accepts candidates who have finished their senior high school studies and professionals who wish to become religious and priests. Its present Dean of Studies is Fr. Norman Peña, Jr., who has doctorate degrees in Communication (Salesianum in Rome) and Education (St Paul University, Manila). Under his and the Rector's guidance, the seminary is turning into a school of communication, offering two choices for a college degree: *Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy or Bachelor of Arts in Communication.* Both degrees offer Philosophy courses that will qualify the graduate to take up Theology leading to the priesthood. Aside from the SSP seminarians, St Paul Seminary also accepts students from other seminaries and religious institutions as well as lay students.

Engaged in digital communication, at this time of pandemic the SSP aspirants in Silang regularly post Bible reflections in the seminary Facebook Page as part of their apostolate. They write short reflections based on a chosen verse from the Readings of the Day and provide accompanying social media graphics. Called *"S-Word: Scripture You Can Share,"* the online program gives them a venue to practice their writing and design skills. They have also ventured into webinars.

MISSION TO THE NATIONS

While vocations especially in Europe and the United States are getting scarce, the Philippines has been blessed with a good number of vocations and has been sending members to mission "*ad gentes*." There have been Filipino members assigned to Nigeria, Venezuela, England, and France. At present, Filipino Paulines — priests and young professed — are found in the United States, Australia, Macau, Spain, Brazil, and Italy (Rome and Milan). Fr. Celso Godilano has been a member of the General Council in Rome for two terms (12 years). Filipino Paulines are continually challenged to expand their horizons, for as the Founder Blessed Alberione emphasizes, "Your parish is the world."

THE CONSECRATED SECULAR INSTITUTES

The SSP Province has seen growth in the Consecrated Secular Institutes aggregated to it, especially the Institute of the Holy Family (ISF) and the Institute of Our Lady of the Annunciation (IMSA). It needs to solidify the Institute of St. Gabriel the Archangel (ISGA) and the Institute of Jesus (IGS). These institutes are consecrated persons who by their secular nature witness to the values of the Kingdom of God in the world, acting as "leaven" of the Gospel. The Province also has Pauline Family members belonging to the Association of Pauline Cooperators (APC), founded by Fr. James Alberione to assist his foundations and many initiatives.



TINIG LOYOLA NEWS ROOM



A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE ON TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE TEACHING

Leilani Lopez

On 23 June 2020, the faculty of Loyola School of Theology (LST) received an email from the VP for Academic Affairs, Fr. Rogel Abais, SJ. It was a memorandum on pre-training workshop for online teaching curiously signed by "Your LST Training Team." For me, that was an email loaded with big unfamiliar words and phrases: instructional design for online teaching, learning management system (LMS), and Canvas. Behind all the jargon, what registered in my mind was that we in the academe were in for a new learning experience in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. First, we had to learn Canvas, the preferred learning management system. Second, we had to apply theory to practice by creating Canvas programs for our courses and populate the same with the modules that would be used in this new pedagogy. Upon receipt of this email, I can assure you that I heard in my mind a distinctive collective sigh of panic mixed with excitement from us professors (if these two emotions can even possibly co-exist). The ending of the email which read, *"We hope exploring Canvas feels like an adventure that opens new possibilities for your teaching style,"* was not exactly reassuring for us non-digital natives despite its optimistic note.

As the academic school year 2020-2021 came closer to its opening, it became very clear that teaching and learning would now be described with these buzzwords: online, distance, remote, flexible, and blended. With Ateneo de Manila University's guidance, LST became one of the pioneers in introducing a completely online learning modality using both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities that have been designed to deliver the same learning outcomes as the physical face-to-face classes.

TECHNOLOGY FOR NON-TECHIES

From June to July, the LST faculty, who were now grouped into clusters, diligently attended the online workshops given by Fr. Francis Alvarez, SJ, and his team of tech buddies. We were given links, materials, and homework leading to the creation of our own courses in the Canvas system. On the side, the more curious (and anxious) of us even attended the Ateneo de Manila University's SALT Institute's slo-mo Canvas tutorials for professors (keyword: slo-mo). Our very own cluster composed of faculty and counselors from the RMT-Center for Family Ministries also Zoomed our way into sharing new tips, new apps, and creative ways of venturing into our virtual classrooms.

The most difficult part of transitioning to an online modality for us teachers was learning how to be more tech-savvy in a matter of a month or two before the academic school year commenced. I consider myself extremely lucky because my three young adult sons who are natural digital natives became my default tech buddies in our new work-from-home set-up. But how about most of my older colleagues whose major tech achievements are PowerPoint lectures they proudly made themselves? Sadly, I know of icon-professor-colleagues who had to give up teaching just because learning Canvas and all the new apps raised their blood pressures and challenged their mental health.



If learning to create modules through Canvas, and the accompanying accoutrement of self-produced video lectures, uploading apps for checking if the students read the assigned readings, and dabbling with apps that supposedly create visually stimulating millennial acceptable audio-visual aids were not torture enough, think about the incredibly unreliable and slow internet! Not to mention the Zoom sessions that get cut off after exactly one hour, unless one has a paid account! I am glad that LST stepped up and gave us some internet allowance to replace the cafeteria and transportation allowance of old.

I must admit that with this new teaching adaptation, I also fell prey to the "add-to-cart" online shopping frenzy for what could make me a cooler teacher in the virtual classroom: a diva-worthy ring light, decent webcam, tripod, laptop stand, microphone, earphones, ergonomically designed chair, and working desk. My workspace has become like a mini ABS-CBN studio – all for the love of teaching.

My biggest achievement so far: I now know how to record my video lectures on Prezi, convert and compress them to smaller files, upload them myself to my very own YouTube channel and embed/post the link to the Canvas module. Ha! But honestly, when I monitor viewership by students, I cannot but feel disappointed and discouraged considering the production effort I put into my video lectures. Yes, dear students, we can see how many of you viewed our videos in our Canvas teacher accounts.

CLASSROOM VIBE: FACE-TO-FACE VS. VIRTUAL

The thing about online teaching is that I miss the classroom. The lectures, recitations, bantering, and interactions done in a face-to-face class can never be approximated by a virtual synchronous class where everyone is in their tiny virtual rectangles onscreen. I feel robbed of the opportunity to get personal and know my students better. Since we were allowed to do only two synchronous sessions throughout the semester, I met my class of 42 students at full attendance twice only, officially. I held non-mandatory synchronous sessions weekly only to check on the students' welfare and mental health, and to clarify and answer questions related to modules which they should have accomplished asynchronously in their own space and time. Seeing my students like a seat plan on screen was not the best way to interact, but it gave us that very much-needed connection and interaction during the lockdown. We all had to adjust to lags on the internet, working with the mute, video on/off, reaction buttons, getting distracted by ever-present rooster or dog noises, and having some side interactions via the chatbox. In this virtual classroom, I must admit that I prefer seeing everyone on video even if they are texting or Facebooking on the side. It is those on video-off that disconcerts me more because I can never be sure if they are actually present in class. However, I just think to myself that they must have poor internet broadband and therefore have to conserve data by not showing themselves on video. Finally, I cannot help but miss the end-of-semester classroom self-care/cultural/international feast which is a must if it were a face-to-face class. For now, Zoom and Google Meet will have to be our virtual classrooms. They do not exactly have the LST classroom vibe, but in compliance with safety protocols, they will have to do for now.

ASSESSING WHAT AND HOW MUCH WAS LEARNED

As far as the goal of educating our students is concerned, this has been an experimental year. The faculty were given a template of connecting overall LST learning outcomes with our course-specific learning outcomes. We all had to redo, realign, and readjust our course syllabi and course outlines, making sure that students would still receive the knowledge, skills, and competencies that the course

offered. It was challenging for me because there was a counseling practicum component in the Pastoral Psychology and Counseling course which I taught. How would students do counseling practicum online?

The bigger challenge was how to integrate theory and practice in a modular set-up. I had to be very conscious about giving requirements that were appropriate, doable, and hopefully, enjoyable. Reflection papers were my non-negotiables, but other requirements became more pandemic-context-oriented, i.e., how theories learned in class translated to the students' growth, development, and maturing in the context of the pandemic. The counseling practicum which I worried about a lot in the beginning became a virtual success, thanks to the assistance of facilitators from RMT-Cefam who had already been eased into online counseling earlier during the lockdown.

Based on the end-of-semester course evaluation, the general complaint was that even with more lenient rules and simpler activities, the students felt overwhelmed and overburdened with so much on their plate during the semester. Despite this, the students expressed their gratitude for the course as it helped them become more aware of their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and meta-personal dynamics through theory, practice, and (virtual) class interactions. I must say that there have been a lot of cognitive and creative juices that flowed in this online teaching and learning process. More importantly, much commitment and compassion also shone through in the process.

What I recounted above as my experience as a teacher in this online modality of teaching is likewise generally mirrored in the experiences of my students based on their reflections and narratives about the whole process. They went through the same adjustments with technology as well as adaptations done with virtual classroom learning. In terms of what could be better, we share the same hope that soon, very soon we will meet each other face-to-face in the lobby, hallways, and classrooms of LST.



LST DEVOTES INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS ON POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL, *FRATELLI TUTTI*

Ed Colmenares, SJ

Loyola School of Theology greeted the New Year 2021 by launching its international study days on the *Fratelli Tutti*. The International Study Days on *Fratelli Tutti* lasted for nine Wednesdays, from January 6, 2021, to March 3, 2021. At 10:30 AM during these nine Wednesdays, the videos were released on LST's YouTube channel. The study showcased several faculty members and alumni from across the world who shared their thoughts and reflections on Pope Francis' third encyclical. The time and schedule were reminiscent of the pre-pandemic on-campus Theological Hour.

LST President Fr. Eric Eusebio, SJ, and Vice-President for Academic Affairs Fr. Rogel Abais, SJ, formally introduced the event with their welcome messages. They highlighted how this recent encyclical of Pope Francis inspires in us a vision of sisterhood, brotherhood, and social friendship, an oft-repeated theme that Pope Francis emphasizes in his speeches and writings.

During these international study days, the speakers did not just present the contents of the encyclical. They also shared their reflections based on their contexts within which they see the challenges and opportunities that *Fratelli Tutti* opens up, whether they are in the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Italy, Indonesia, Kenya, or India. It is with these reflections that the International Study Days aim to deepen the LST community's reading of *Fratelli Tutti*.

The speakers for the International Study Days were: Fr. Francis Xavier Nguyen Hai Tính, SJ (Vietnam), Fr. Manuel Montesclaros, SJ (Philippines), Fr. Phuong Dinh Toai, MI (Vietnam), Fr. Jojo Fung, SJ (Malaysia),Fr. Rowan Rebustillo (Philippines), Fr. Walter Diaz, CS (Argentina), Fr. Cesare Sposetti, SJ (Italy), Sr. Antonetta Pereira FMM (India), Fr. Wilbert Mireh, SJ (Myanmar), Fr. Martin Waweru Kamau, SJ (Kenya), Fr. Greg Soetomo, SJ (Indonesia), Fr. Jose Hildy Banaynal, SJ (Cambodia), and Dr. Maria Teresa Guingona-Africa (Philippines).

The videos of their talks may still be accessed on the YouTube channel of the Loyola School of Theology.



HOLY SEE GRANTS *NIHIL OBSTAT* TO SEVEN LST FACULTY MEMBERS

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

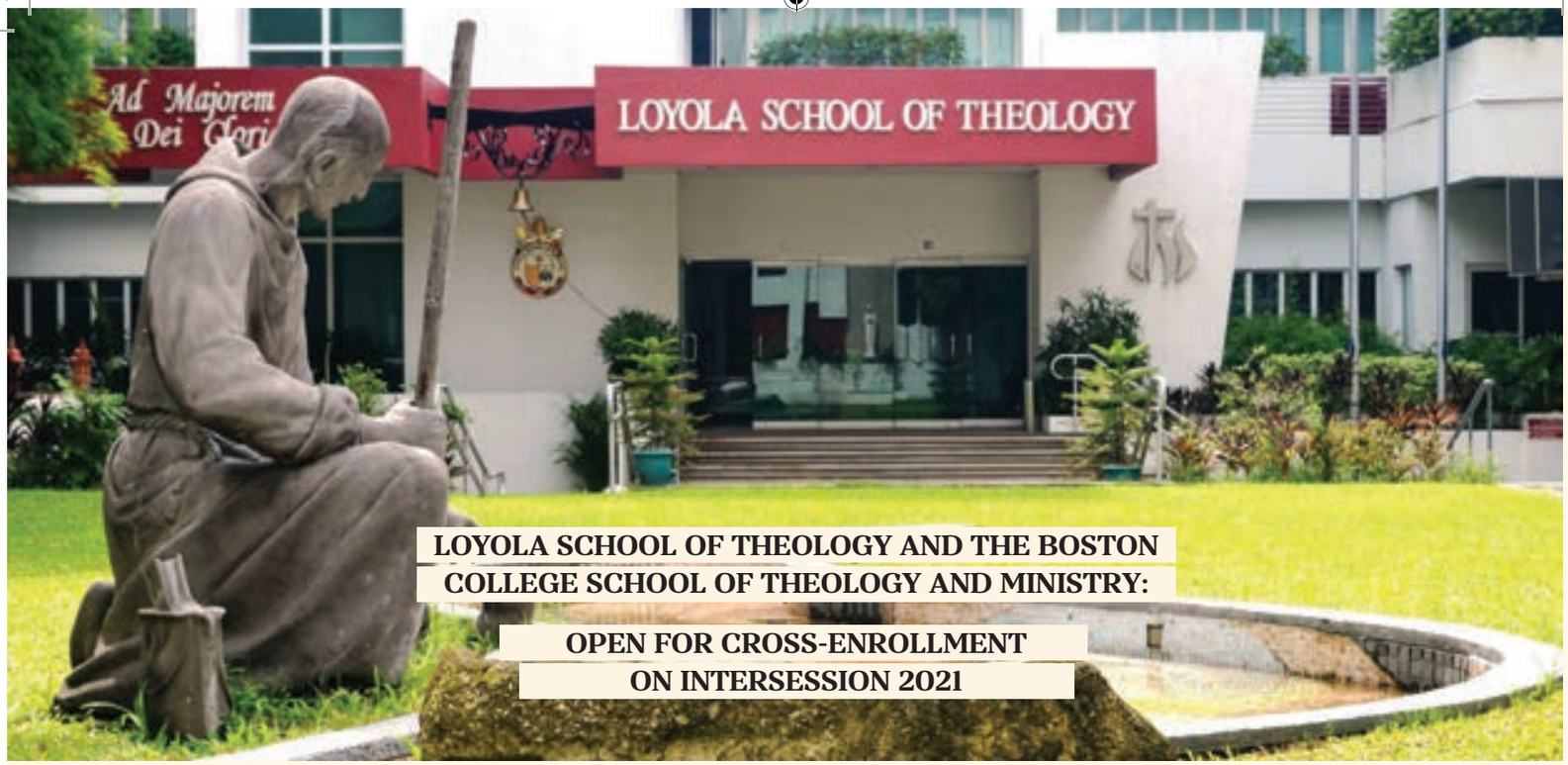
On March 4, 2021, LST President Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio Jr., SJ, announced to the LST Community and Friends that the Holy See has granted *Nihil Obstat* to seven LST Faculty members. The *nihil obstat* ("nothing hinders") is a declaration of no objection for these professors to teach. It is the Holy See's promotion of the LST Faculty to the ranks of Full Professor and Associate Professor, as contained in its rescript dated 17 December 2020 and 2 February 2021.

Full Professor:

Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, SJ, STD, Moral Theology

Associate Professors:
Fr. Francis D. Alvarez, SJ, STL, PhD, Biblical Theology
Fr. Abundio R. Babor, Jr., MSC, STD, Moral Theology
Fr. Hartono Budi, SJ, ThD, Systematic Theology
Sr. Maria Anicia B. Co, RVM, STD, PhD, Biblical Theology
Sr. Bernardita D. Dianzon, FSP, STD, PhD, Biblical Theology
Fr. Reginaldo M. Mananzan, SJ, JCD, Canon Law

Fr. Eusebio expressed his sincerest gratitude to His Eminence Most Rev. Giuseppe Cardinal Versaldi, DD, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, for his continued support of, and confidence in, Loyola School of Theology and its Faculty.



LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND THE BOSTON COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY:

OPEN FOR CROSS-ENROLLMENT ON INTERSESSION 2021

By virtue of a Memorandum of Understanding between Ateneo de Manila University and Boston College, Massachusetts, LST and Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (BC-STM) have come to a cross-enrollment agreement for their respective students upon the conclusion of a series of online meetings held on 9 and 23 February and 9 March 2021. LST was represented by President Fr. Enrico Eusebio SJ,Vice President for Academic Affairs Fr. Rogel Anecito Abais SJ, and Executive Secretary Fr. Eric Marcelo Genilo SJ; BC-STM counterparts were Dean Fr. Thomas Stegman SJ, Associate Dean Dr. Jennifer Bader, Associate Director of Supervised Ministry, Global & Community Engagement Marcia Ryan, Associate Dean for Finance & Administration Maura Colleary and Assistant Dean for Graduate Enrollment Management Anthony Russo.

This Intersession 2021, LST will offer both LST-hosted courses and BC-STM-hosted courses as follows:

LST-Hosted Courses

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

BPM 102/TMP 211.04 Introduction to the Old Testament | Fr. Felipe Fruto Ramirez SJ, STD | Schedule: MWF, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course introduces the students to Church teaching regarding Scripture in general and Biblical inspiration. It guides the students through the world of the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament which reflects the socio-political and religious history and ideals of ancient Israel. The following topics are treated: 1) the Bible and the Literature of the Ancient Near East; 2) the formation of the canon of the OT; 3) the books of the Torah; 4) the books of the Prophets; 5) the books of the Writings; 6) the overall message of the Old Testament and its relationship to the New. The course offers pedagogical tools in interpreting the Old Testament and in explaining and proclaiming the Sacred Scriptures to students and parishioners and to whomever the participants minister.

BPM 106/TMP 212.04 Introduction to the New Testament | Moses Catan, PhD | Schedule: TThS, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course introduces the student to diachronic and synchronic methodologies in interpreting the Bible. With this methodological background, the student is given the opportunity to read and study the texts of the New Testament and so gain a basic overview of their content and major themes and concerns.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

TMP 226.06/TMP 326.06 Engaging in Dialogue with Indigenous Cultures and Spirituality | Fr. Jojo Fung SJ, STL, PhD | Schedule: MWF, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course enables the students to be enriched by the religiocultural richness of the indigenous peoples in the use of the spiral process (10th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences FABC, 2012 Vietnam) of learning and doing theology. The spiral process begins with narratives of the students' experience of the beliefs and practices of the indigenous communities. Prayerful analysis of the students' narratives in the contexts of indigenous peoples

enable the students to formulate a more indigenous specific and sensitive theological framework that enables the students to discerningly theologize on the best impulses (GC 34, D. 4, no. 8) amidst the onslaughts of globalization that deterritorialize and dereligionize the indigenous cultures and spiritualities and how they resonate with the Christian faith.

This theological reflection will also reflect on the need for a postcolonial epistemic shift in the face of neocolonialism (e.g. settler colonialism) and neoextractivism. This theological reflection will lead to a pastoral response by which the students formulate a few pastoral strategies that inculturated the sacramental celebration of the rite of passage by incorporating the religiocultural beliefs and ritual practices. The use of this discerning hermeneutic enables the students to enable the students to respond to Missio Dei for a more integral and sustainable livelihood with joy, dignity, justice, peace and resilience amongst the indigenous communities.

MORAL THEOLOGY

TMP 202/TMP 302 Fundamental Moral Theology | Fr Eric Marcelo Genilo SJ, STD | Schedule: MWF, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course seeks to give a historical, practical, and pastoral approach to the study of fundamental moral theology. It presents the historical richness and diversity of the Church's moral tradition, seeking to provide the student with an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the resources of the tradition. By tracing the history of the development of the Church's moral teaching, the course seeks to relate the Church's ongoing moral discernment with the development of the Church's self-understanding as it journeys through human history. Through the use of cases, the course illustrates methods of moral analysis, the application of moral principles, the dynamics between magisterium and conscience, and pastoral approaches to difficult moral cases especially taking



into account the social and cultural realities in the Asian context.

BPM 103 Overview of Moral Theology | Fr. Abundio Babor, M.S.C., S.T.D. | Schedule: MWF, 2:00-5:00 pm

This is a synthetic course on Christian morality that offers an overview of fundamental morality, sexual ethics, bio-ethics and social justice. It presents the historical richness and diversity of the Church's moral tradition, seeking to provide the students with an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the sources of the moral tradition. Through the use of cases, the course will illustrate methods of moral analysis and the application of moral principles.

SPIRITUALITY

TMP 257.04/TMP 357.04 Developing in the Spiritual Life: The Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives of the Human Person | Dr. Carmen Valdes | Schedule: Tue-Thu Sat, 9:00 am to 12 nn

This course develops a critical theory of personal identity and its development which are informed by perspectives from psychology and Christian Spirituality. It aids the students in developing an understanding of the dynamics of human growth and development as distinct from, but complementary to, the dynamics of spiritual growth and development.



BC-Hosted Courses

LANGUAGE COURSES

TMP 295.31/TMP 395.31 Latin I (3 credits) | TMP 295.32/TMP 395.32 Latin II (3 credits) | Franklin T. Harkins, PhD | 8:45-11:45 am (8:45 pm Manila) Monday through Thursday June 14 - August 5, 2021

This elementary course in Latin presumes no prior study of the language. Basic principles of Latin phonology, morphology and syntax will be treated in classes and reinforced by regular homework exercises and their review in class. Emphasis will be placed on the vocabulary that is appropriate to the various theological disciplines. This course is highly intensive and requires significant weekly work and a fair measure of independent learning. Students will be expected to master the basic grammar and most common vocabulary.

TMP 295.11/TMP 395.11 Biblical Hebrew I (3 credits) TMP 295.12/TMP 395.12 Biblical Hebrew II (3 credits) | Angela Kim Harkins, PhD 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm (1:30 am Manila) | Monday through Thursday | June 14 to August 5, 2021

This course is an intensive introduction to the grammar and syntax of biblical Hebrew. While no prior knowledge of the language is presumed, students must memorize the biblical Hebrew consonantal alphabet prior to our first meeting. The goals of the course are (1) to learn the grammar of biblical Hebrew; (2) to be able to use classic reference tools for biblical Hebrew; (3) to read and translate pointed passages from the Hebrew Bible into clear idiomatic English.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

TMP 211.62/TMP 311.62 Wisdom Literature: Job and Suffering (3 credits) | Andrew Davis, PhD | 5:45 pm - 9:00 pm (5:45 am Manila) |Monday through Thursday | June 28 to July 15, 2021

This course examines how the Hebrew Bible addresses questions around human suffering. After surveying different biblical perspectives, we will immerse ourselves in the Book of Job, in which Job and his friends (and, ultimately, YHWH) consider the meaning of Job's suffering. While this course is primarily interested in the theologies of the Book of Job, we will also take into account the book's literary artistry, redaction history and historical context. By the end of this course I hope you will have a better understanding of this important book, which is as timeless, complex, and inexhaustible as the mystery it contemplates.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

TMP 341 Practical Theology: Theological Foundations in a Practical Perspective (3 credits) | For Licentate and Doctoral Students Only | O. Ernesto Valiente, PhD | 5:45 to 9:00 pm (5:45 am Manila) Monday through Friday June 28 to July 15, 2021

Taught from a pastoral perspective, this course offers an overview of contemporary Christian theology, introducing basic theological themes reflected in Co-Workers e.g. the cultural context in which we do theology, God, being human, Jesus, reign of God, Church. It considers theological methods and investigates the sources that contribute constructions of theological positions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TMP 281/TMP 381 Basics in the Renewal of Religious Education: Education in Faith: Foundations and Practice (3 credits) | Thomas H. Groome, PhD | 8:30am - 11:45am (8:30 pm Manila) | Monday through Thursday | June 28 to July 15, 2021

This course proposes theological, spiritual and pedagogical foundations for a participatory and empowering approach to faith-based education, pastoral ministry and service. Reflecting religious education as a mode of practical theology and concern for the spiritual foundations of Catholic education, the course invites participants to develop their own praxis of educating from and for faith. This is the purpose of the Church's educational work in the world. However, it is also a responsibility of every Christian person and of every function of ministry and faith-based service.

SPIRITUALITY

TMP 256/TMP 356 Ignatian Spirituality: An Introduction (3 credits)
Eileen Burke-Sullivan, PhD
Associate Professor at Creighton University, Nebraska
8:45 am - 11:45 am (8:45 pm Manila)
Monday through Thursday
July 19 to August 5, 2021

A study of the coherent theological vision and practical spiritual teachings of Ignatius of Loyola through his writings (e.g. Spiritual Exercises, Diary, and Testament). The course explores both the historical foundations for Ignatius's spiritual program and its subsequent interpretations by theologians and pastoral practitioners.

IN MEDIAS RES, GOD INCARNATES

LST ONLINE MASS CELEBRATION 2020
PRESIDED BY REV. FR. NILO E. TANALEGA, SJ

Bro. Francis Lajola, IHF

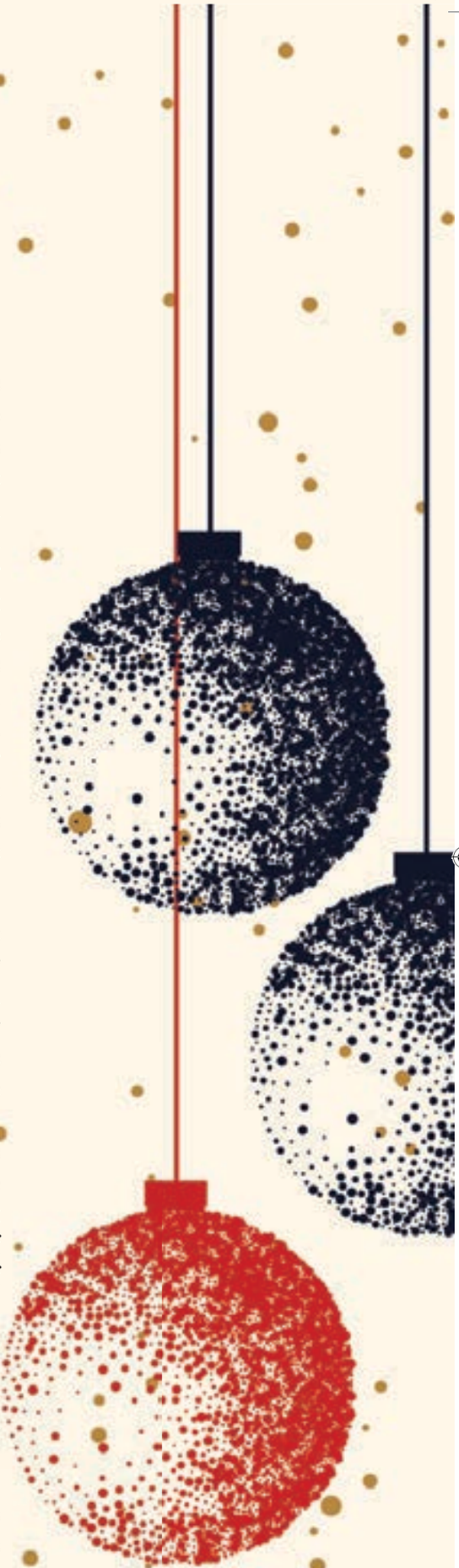
Christmas is the celebration of the coming of the source of the joy of the world, Jesus Christ, who illumines the world in the darkness of sin. It is a joyful celebration present in every country and culture, especially in our school, the Loyola School of Theology. Every year, the LST community gather to celebrate the Mass and have a simple dinner party, where talents of students, professors, and staff are showcased. Yet, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this on-site celebration turned impossible. Still, it did not hinder the joy of the coming of the Messiah *in medias res*. LST celebrated the season through an online Mass last December 22, 2020. The presider and homilist was **Fr. Nilo Tanalega, SJ**, an Associate Professor of Pastoral Counseling.

In his introductory remark, Fr. Nilo said to the LST community, "We join you in making do what is worth celebrating in this crucial year of ourselves and of the people we serve in our different ministries." Indeed, the pandemic has changed the course of our lives, making us adapt to the current needs of the faithful in order to let them feel the coming of the Christ-Child.

In media res, God incarnates. In the middle of things, of suffering, captivity, and poverty, God enters amid humanity filled with adversity. This is the core message of Fr. Nilo's homily. He began by pointing to the light that shines despite this pandemic. Though the pandemic changes the landscape of celebration and ministry, our efforts to reach the faithful spark some hope for people wanting a celebration. It is hard to celebrate when people are losing jobs and businesses, as well as health, and even lives. Yet, the Responsorial Psalm invites us, "Lift up your heads and see, your redemption is near at hand." In the spirit of Christmas, the Lord gives us the grace to face this pandemic with faith, hope, and love.

Fr. Nilo enumerated three aspects that bring forth "new meaning now for positive service in the vineyard of the Lord which may indeed cause a celebration." First is the opportunity in the *curam*, the care of the people. Fr. Nilo affirmed that though many of our ministers struggled in the face of online communication, "preachers did not become short in their delivery of the message and interpretation of the Word of God and in the *curam* and caring of the people." Indeed, people do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house (Mt 5:15).

Second, personal closeness and warmth are the standards of good ministry. In spite of the spatial-temporal challenges, there



exists a call for authentic ministry. Fr. Nilo pointed out: "Distance, seen before as negative non-engagement, is now transformed into an enhancement of survival. Thus, it has become a challenge for ministry from afar, from a distance. But that ministry from a distance has worked for us as an opportunity for ministry with dignity."

Third, and most important, crises are an opportunity to enter people's lives and loves. As the pandemic broadens and lengthens, it brings about severe loss, anxiety, and depression. This invites us to enter the sphere of the suffering person and to create an encounter with the Prince of Peace and Consolation. Fr. Nilo related it to the symbol of love par excellence, the Cross: "The horizontal beam crosses with the vertical beam. The horizontal beam of the suffering people crosses with the vertical beam of God's intervention for us." The birth of Christ is a far greater reality than the pandemic; it renews the course of the world when graces and blessings pour into our vulnerabilities.

At Christmas, God enters *in medias res* of humanity. Christmas is the celebration of God meeting with humanity. And because of the millions of viral infections and death, as well as the 4.5 million Filipinos who lost their jobs, there arises a challenge to be *in medias res* of humanity. This is crucial for if we respond negatively, Fr. Nilo said, people may doubt the presence of God. Maybe God is dead, some people may think. But he added, "Fortunately, we can also borrow something from the 70's, the resolution of this 'God is dead.'" How so? By saying that God is not dead if God is bread. Breaking bread becomes meaningful and valuable now... the bread of sharing with the unemployed, those who have lost their health, those who feel abandoned. It is sharing Jesus who is the Bread of Life, who satisfies our hunger and quenches our thirst.

Fr. Nilo ended his homily with a challenge to make the world feel the presence of the God of Love. Amid the pandemic, members of the LST community are called to be active missionary disciples *in medias res*, that people may feel the true spirit of Christmas.

Concelebrating in the online Mass were Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio, Jr., SJ, LST President; Fr. Rogel Anecito L. Abais, S.J., Vice-President for Academic Affairs; and Rev. Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, S.J., Executive Secretary. It ended with a carol of songs from the Jesuit theologians.



LST HOLDS GRADUATION EXERCISES 2021

Mamert Mañus, SJ

Loyola School of Theology's 22nd Baccalaureate Mass and Distribution of Diplomas was held on 26 May 2021, at 3 PM, at the Church of Gesù. It took the place of a traditional graduation ceremony due to the IATF guidelines in the ongoing pandemic. While last year's Baccalaureate Mass during the early days of the pandemic was done via Zoom and livestreamed on YouTube, this year's Mass was no longer livestreamed, as actual face-to-face gathering for

the Mass was already possible. Complying with the 10 percent seating restrictions, the event was attended by no more than a hundred individuals, more than half of whom were the graduates themselves. The rest of the participants comprised some superiors and formators of the graduates, the main Mass presider and the concelebrants, the choir, as well as the staff of LST and the Gesù. All the participants were seated with more than enough social distancing between each other.

In his introduction before the start of the Baccalaureate Mass, Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio, SJ, LST President, noted how this was a truly momentous year for everyone, especially for the graduates who had to complete their final year of academic formation in LST online, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also took the occasion to note how the priests, brothers, and seminarians of the Ministers of the Infirm (Camillians) were among the religious and clergy who bravely and in faith stood their ground in the face of COVID-19. Thus, in recognition of the service of the Ministers of the Infirm during this time of the pandemic, the main Presider and Homilist was Fr. Angel V. Crisostomo, MI, Master of the Temporarily Professed of the Camillians. Concelebrating with him were Fr. Eusebio, SJ, Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, SJ, and Fr. Renato R. Repole, SJ.

The Class Valedictorian, Fr. Cesare Sposetti, SJ, recorded a valedictory address from his hometown in Italy, and everyone listened to it in rapt attention. Fr. Sposetti recounted great memories of his four-year stay in the Philippines, especially pointing out how his theological studies were greatly grounded and enculturated in the Philippine and Asian context, as well as in the international milieu of LST, which has seen a significant rise in its international student population. He further expressed his deep gratitude for the four years of formation and companionship with everyone.

This year's official graduates totaled 89 and are comprised of the following: Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology: 54, Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL): 7, Doctorate in Sacred Theology: 4, Certificate in Basic Pastoral Ministry: 6, Certificate in Integral Ecology (CIE): 4, Certificate in the Pastoral Care of Migrants (PCM): 4, Certificate in Pre-Theology Studies: 8, Certificate in Theological Studies: 2.







HOMILY OF FR. ANGEL CRISOSTOMO, MI

Baccalaureate Mass, 26 May 2021

INTRODUCTION BEFORE THE BACCALAUREATE MASS

This has been a momentous year for all of us, but especially for our graduates who had to complete their final year of academic formation in LST online amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen misery around us, but we have also witnessed the heroism of our medical, economic, and religious frontliners as they served those in need. Among the religious and clergy who bravely—and in faith—stood their ground in the face of COVID-19 were the priests, brothers, and seminarians of the Camillians. In his Message on the 450th anniversary of the birth of St. Camillus de Lellis, Pope Francis said that the Camillians "have given their lives in service to victims of contagious diseases, confirming the truth that dedication to the point of heroism belongs to the prophetic nature of the consecrated life" (Vita consecrata, n. 83). How can we not see in this flourishing holiness a confirmation of the validity of the Camillian charism as a way to the perfection of charity? In recognition of the service of the Ministers of the Infirm during this time of the pandemic, we have invited the Master of the Temporarily Professed of the Camillians, **Fr. Angel V. Crisostomo, MI**, *to be our Presider and Homilist in this afternoon's Baccalaureate Mass.*

HOMILY OF FR. CRISOSTOMO

My heartfelt congratulations to the LST Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students! Today, I wish to leave with you, dear graduates, some thoughts on the gift of our priestly vocation gathered from our humble experience as Camillians in a time of pandemic. As Ministers of the Infirm, we maintain a history of being true to our Fourth Vow to serve the sick even in danger of our lives. We are to serve the poor sick, even if plague stricken, in whom we see Christ himself in



the person of the sick, with the heart of a tender mother taking good care of her only child who is ill—not for any personal gain, but voluntarily and for the love of God (from the Constitution of the Order promulgated by the Second General Chapter, 1599).

St. Philip Neri, whose memorial we celebrate today, became the Spiritual Director of our founder, St. Camillus de Lellis. St. Philip Neri initially discouraged St. Camillus from forming a group of laymen, known to him through "fake news" as a "glee-club" disturbing the hospital operations with their zeal for prayer and service to the sick. But God took it upon himself to furnish Father Philip with indisputable evidence of the necessity of Camillus' undertaking. One day, two of Camillus' Religious were assisting a dying person at the home of Cardinal Pallotto. Philip entered and the two respectfully stood aside to make way for him. But the saint protested saying: "Carry on, my sons, carry on with your good work. I can assure you I have seen angels themselves putting unto the lips of two other confreres of yours the words of comfort they were searching for to console the dying man they were assisting" (Mario Vanti, *St. Camillus de Lellis and His Ministers of the Sick*, 84-85).

In 1994, our Order began to celebrate every 25th of May (birthday of St. Camillus) as the feast day of the Camillian Martyrs of Charity who died serving the sick since the epidemics and plagues of 17th century Europe. In 1630, we lost 56 Camillians when a plague devastated northern and central Italy. Another plague in Italy in 1656-1657 led to the death of 86 Camillians, two of whom were Provincial Superiors and the Superior General then.

Now, during this Covid-19 pandemic, many of us are getting infected while serving the sick: in India, 10 got infected; in the Sicilian-Napolitan Province, 2; in the French Province, 2; in the Spanish Province, 3; in Kenya, 1; in Brazil, 9; and 13 in the Philippine Province. We have been losing confreres around the world. In the North Italian Province six got infected and three died. Six of our lay collaborators there also lost their lives. In the Polish Province, three got infected and one passed away.

We heard in the Gospel how Jesus called the Twelve to him and said to them, "Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:42-45).

Pope Francis, just a few months after he was elected Pope, addressing the Superiors General, had something to say on the value of service. He said, "We must never forget that true power, at any level, is service, whose bright summit is upon the Cross. May you always know how to exercise authority by accompanying, understanding, helping and loving. Let us keep our gaze fixed on the Cross: there is found any authority in the Church, where the One who is the Lord becomes a servant to the point of the total gift of himself" (*To the Participants of the Plenary Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General*, 8 May 2013).

St. Camillus used to call our response to a plague as a "festival of charity." Apparently, this time, aside from our pastoral care to the patients and personnel as chaplains in the hospitals, we became known through social media platforms while responding alongside the many members of the Church who have been offering a magnanimous response of charity since the beginning of this pandemic. With the grace of God, we were able to distribute relief goods consisting of food packs, hygiene kits, and PPEs for poor families and healthcare facilities in need. Some of us were also able to conduct medical missions and mental health interventions in some areas. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve as partners with many other religious, lay, non-Catholics, and organizations who are willing to serve. I must say we have not done much, but we simply did our duty.

Yes, we vowed to risk our lives for others. But we never promised to risk others' lives by

infecting people because we were potential carriers of the virus. We have managed to commit ourselves in serving the sick by first protecting ourselves in order to protect others. We have followed safety and health protocols. My Superior in the formation house supported our Scholastics in their decision to continue doing their apostolate, but NOT to commit suicide, for they can still serve with PPEs. I must admit with deep gratitude that not only our charity but also our faith and hope have sustained us especially when we became the sick person. In July last year, one of our Religious suffered severe symptoms and was rushed to the hospital. Sharing his story, he recalls his experience as a revelation. Experiencing all the typical symptoms of COVID-19, he had gone through the 10-day isolation with sadness and fear because of the uncertainties that the new coronavirus brought. Aside from not feeling well physically, another burden he faced was the feeling of being alone and the fear that he could be a spreader of this virus to others. Throughout his COVID-19 journey, his rosary was his constant companion. He realized that a truly deep sense of faith and hope are needed to survive any undertaking, that unwavering faith in the Lord that you can be healed, and that hope that you can surpass all those sufferings. There should be complete trust and surrender to the Lord.

It is worth remembering the children of Fatima. When I experienced having sore throat, muscle pains, and fever, I thought it was COVID-19. Thankfully, it was just the flu, and I recovered after taking some over-the-counter medicines. Nonetheless, I was scared; I felt paranoid. But the experience led me to good realizations about myself and my faith. I realized I was not ready to die. Not inside my bedroom.

I am a Camillian. I should die in the act of serving the sick. Not stuck in a bed. "Not here, Lord, not in this way" was my pleading. Until all of a sudden, I came to remember the children of Fatima—how they submitted themselves to God, and two of them were praising the Lord in their deathbed. They died at the height of the widespread Spanish Flu.

I remember also St. Therese of Liseux: how she praised the Lord in her deathbed. She died quietly from tuberculosis. I came to remember our Italian Scholastic, Nicola D'Onofrio, who also praised God on his deathbed. He died of cancer on June 12, 1964.

Thanks to my training in this School (I graduated here on March 9, 2005), I have developed a good sense of discernment. And so, remembering these young ones, I was able to confront my pride and I humbly begged in prayer, "If man lives by God's Word, so should I die by God's Word, whenever and wherever and however the Lord may be praised."

You see, when the situation seems so disheartening for us, we just go back to the Cross. No wonder St. Camillus made sure to attach



the Cross on our chests and be identified as Camillians. The Cross reminds us of the merciful love of Christ Crucified who strengthens our weak faith, restores to us his peace, and eventually encourages us to serve again. While in a state of prayer, the Crucified Christ told St. Camillus, "Fear not, Camillus. This is not your work but mine." Those were the words St. Camillus heard when he thought of quitting his ministry because he could no longer bear the ill will and opposition of envious authorities in the hospital. He was measuring up his failure against the limited work he could ever do. Only to make him realize in prayer that his calling was just to gaze upon the Cross. With that he regained his commitment to serve. And so, I am telling you, take the risk! Do you have to delay your ordination? Is not this time the right time to be a priest? Be Christ, the Good Shepherd and Servant, to his Church. When I asked one of our Religious assigned as a parish priest how to be a priest in a time of pandemic, he quickly replied with reflections from his experience.

> First, never go away from God.
> Second, look back at who you are,
> your identity as a priest.
> Third, be open to different changes
> in the situation.
> And fourth, never get discouraged
> but keep moving on, knowing that
> you are doing God's work.

After so many things that have just happened and have been done, you will go back again to God saying: "*Pasensiya na po, 'yun lang ang nagawa ko.* I am sorry, that was all that I could do." It was enough that you have served.

May the intercession of the Blessed Mother, Our Lady Health of the Sick, be upon you. Trusting in the Lord's promise of eternal life, we remember in this Eucharist the passing of our LST professors due to COVID-19: Fr. Timoteo Ofrasio, SJ; Sr. Mirasol Navidad, RSCJ; and Msgr. Sabino Vengco, Jr. We also pray for our student, Fr. Didik Bagiyowinadi of the Diocese of Malang, Indonesia.

Ad majorem Dei gloriam. May the glory of God be seen in the best of care we serve. Amen.



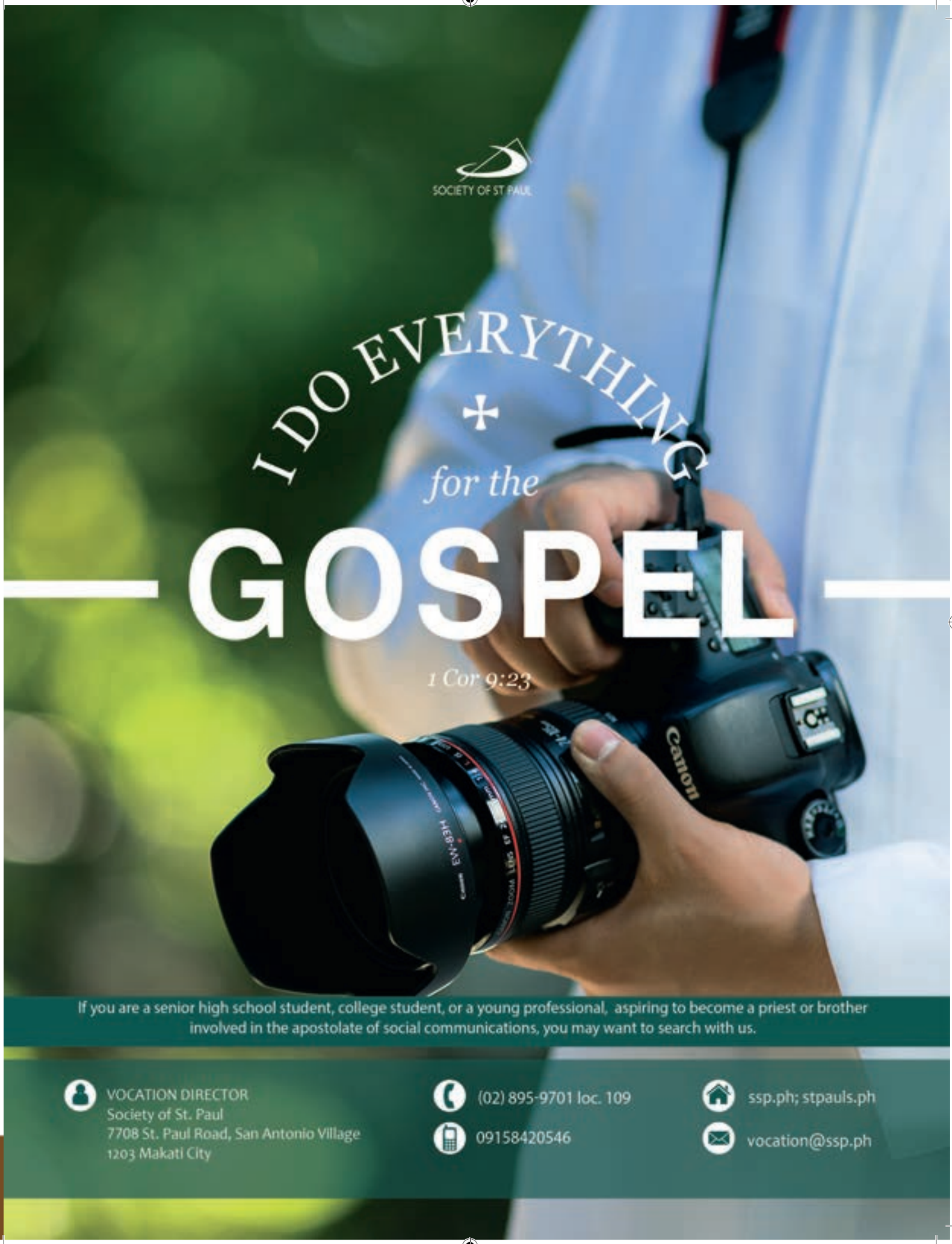
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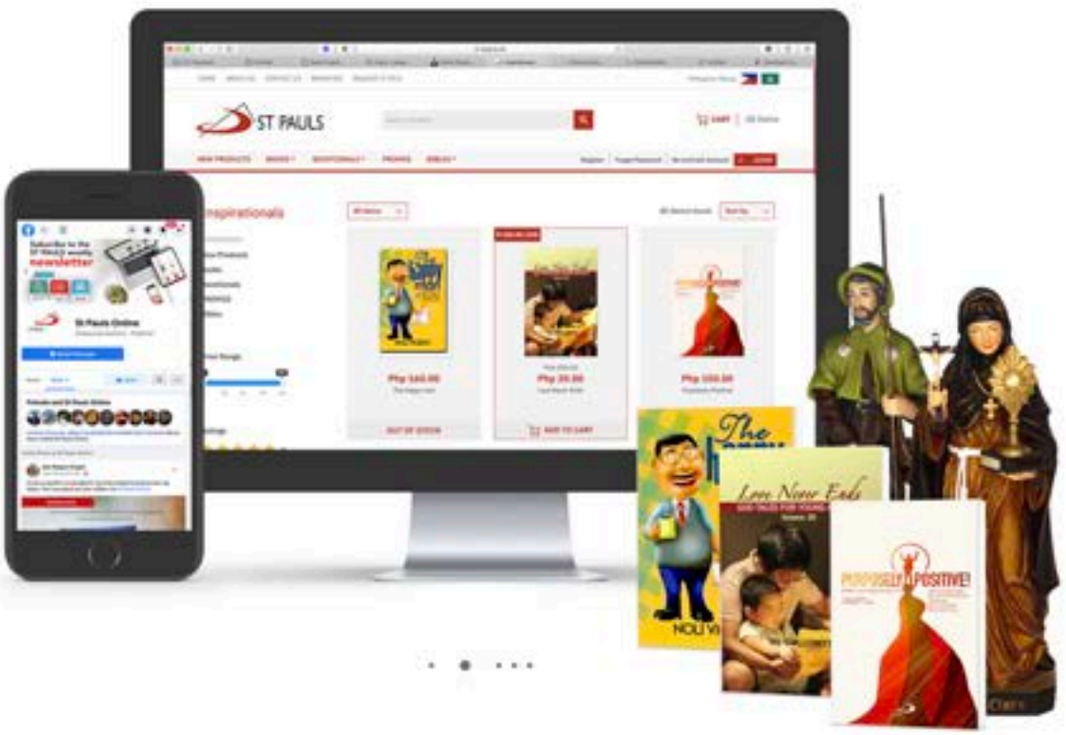
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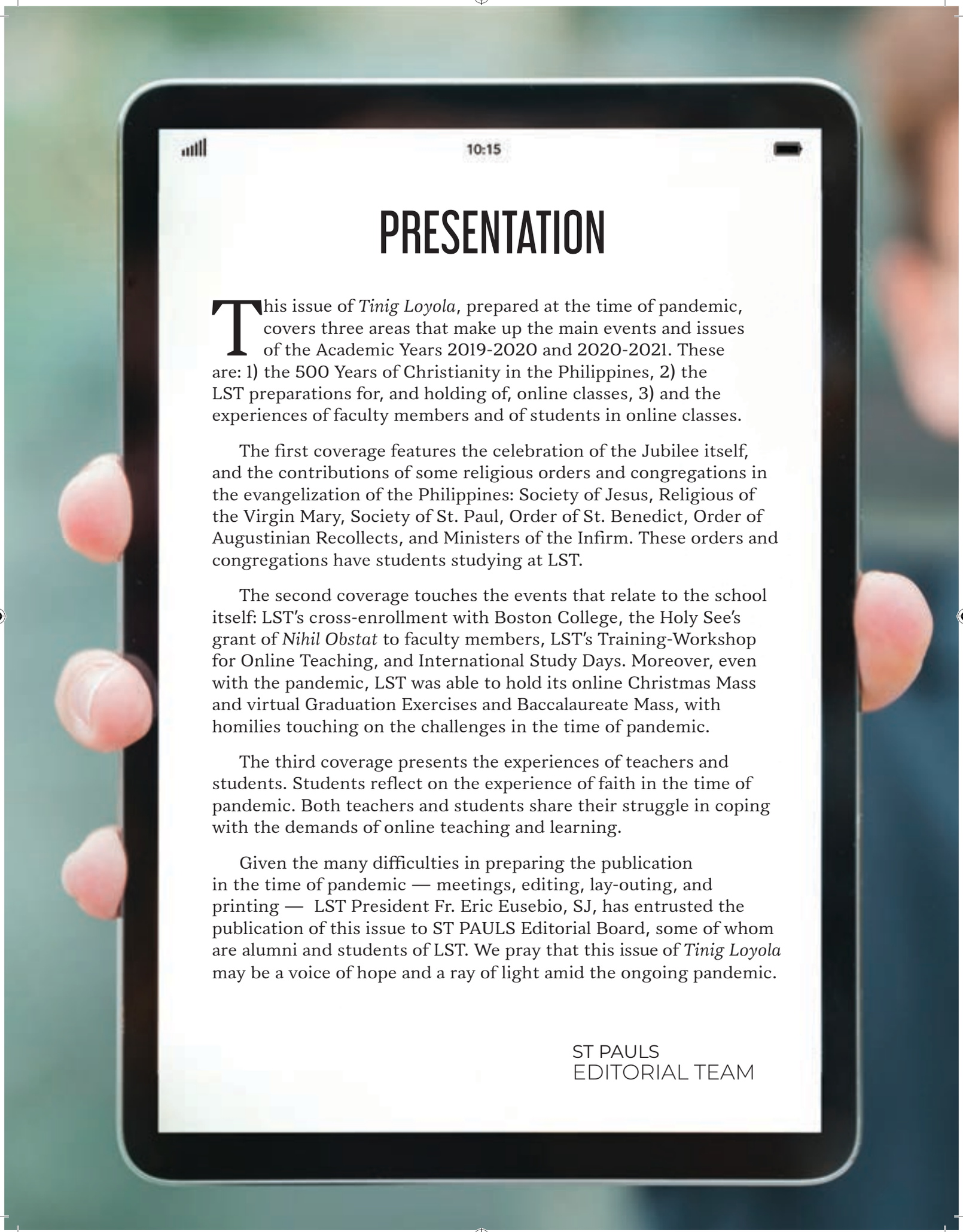




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PRESENTATION

This issue of *Tinig Loyola*, prepared at the time of pandemic, covers three areas that make up the main events and issues of the Academic Years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. These are: 1) the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines, 2) the LST preparations for, and holding of, online classes, 3) and the experiences of faculty members and of students in online classes.

The first coverage features the celebration of the Jubilee itself, and the contributions of some religious orders and congregations in the evangelization of the Philippines: Society of Jesus, Religious of the Virgin Mary, Society of St. Paul, Order of St. Benedict, Order of Augustinian Recollects, and Ministers of the Infirm. These orders and congregations have students studying at LST.

The second coverage touches the events that relate to the school itself: LST's cross-enrollment with Boston College, the Holy See's grant of *Nihil Obstat* to faculty members, LST's Training-Workshop for Online Teaching, and International Study Days. Moreover, even with the pandemic, LST was able to hold its online Christmas Mass and virtual Graduation Exercises and Baccalaureate Mass, with homilies touching on the challenges in the time of pandemic.

The third coverage presents the experiences of teachers and students. Students reflect on the experience of faith in the time of pandemic. Both teachers and students share their struggle in coping with the demands of online teaching and learning.

Given the many difficulties in preparing the publication in the time of pandemic — meetings, editing, lay-outing, and printing — LST President Fr. Eric Eusebio, SJ, has entrusted the publication of this issue to ST PAULS Editorial Board, some of whom are alumni and students of LST. We pray that this issue of *Tinig Loyola* may be a voice of hope and a ray of light amid the ongoing pandemic.

ST PAULS
EDITORIAL TEAM

CELEBRATING 500



YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

On September 20, 1519, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer in the service of the King of Spain, left Spain in command of five ships. He believed that he could reach the Spice Islands by sailing west. Reaching the tip of the South American continent, the expedition crossed the vast Pacific Ocean and on March 16, 1521, reached an island in what would become the Philippines. It was then the feast of St. Lazarus, and Magellan named the island San Lazaro.

A week later, Magellan's fleet sailed on to Limasawa Island where the Europeans were befriended by Rajah Kolambo. In thanksgiving, the first Mass was celebrated in Limasawa on March 31, Easter Sunday. Later, Kolambo led the Europeans to Sugbu (Cebu) where they could find both food and spices. Magellan won the friendship of the island's chief Rajah Humabon. Learning from Magellan "beautiful words" like the Christian command to honor one's parents, Humabon asked for baptism and received the name Carlos in honor of the king of Aragon-Castile. His wife Hara Amihan was also baptized and given the name Juana. She fell in love with a statue of the Child Jesus, and Magellan gave it to her. The beginning of Christianity in the islands would henceforth be marked by the Mass at Limasawa, the baptism of Humabon, and the gift of the Sto. Niño.

Magellan got involved in the quarrel between the two chiefs of the nearby Mactan Island: Zula and Lapu-Lapu. He volunteered to do battle himself against Lapu-Lapu to show the chiefs how the Europeans fought. But his band of 49 soldiers had no chance against Mactan's fighting force of 1,500. The native fighters hit him with a poisoned dart and cut him down on the spot. The Europeans were forced to sail hurriedly lest the Cebuanos killed them. Under Juan Sebastian Elcano, the ship *Victoria* was able to return to Spain with only 18 survivors. Elcano was the first navigator to sail around the world.

Hence, the evangelization proper of the islands did not begin with Magellan. On February 2, 1543, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos reached eastern Mindanao but proceeded to the Moluccas. Some of his men had gone as far as Leyte, which they named Felipina in honor of the crown prince, the

PHILIPPINES

future King Philip II of Spain. Later this name would be given to all the islands.

The work of evangelization started with the expedition of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi which left the port of Mexico on November 19, 1564. With Legaspi was a veteran sailor who became an Augustinian priest, Fray Andres de Urdaneta. On April 27, 1565, Legaspi entered Cebu harbor unopposed. In one of the houses, a Greek sailor named Marmeo found a well-preserved statue of the Sto. Niño, probably the very image Magellan had given to Humabon's wife. Legaspi took it as a sign of God's approval of his adventure.

Legaspi made Cebu the base of the Spaniards' expansion to the other islands. In 1570, he sent Martin de Goiti to Manila where he defeated Rajah Soliman. Legaspi later moved to Manila and established Spanish settlements with the arrival of Spanish colonists from Mexico.

The missionary enterprise began. In the 16th-century Spain, it was generally held that the king could conquer and rule foreign lands provided that he helped the Catholic Church to spread Christianity. Augustinian missionaries who came with Legaspi started to preach the Gospel. The Franciscans followed in 1577, the Jesuits in 1581, the Dominicans in 1587, and the Recollects in 1606.

A REASON TO CELEBRATE

The year 2021 marks the fifth centenary of the coming of Christianity to the country. There are quarters who question why Filipinos should celebrate it. Isn't this purely a celebration for the Catholic Church which does not concern other people or the State, especially given the constitutional separation of the Church and State? Moreover, Christianity and colonization came together; the cross came with the sword and the cannon.

In response, different sectors remind especially the State to take into account the present reality: more than 81% of the population are Catholics. The government that ignores this celebration forgets that Christianity or Catholicism is an integral part of the history and culture of the Philippines. Christianization and colonization that came together had certainly their dark side—the suffering, atrocities, humiliation, and subjugation of the natives, the encomienda system, etc. But with mistakes and shortcomings came also the bright side. A balanced assessment of both is necessary.

The Catholic leadership in the Philippines would like to emphasize that what is celebrated in 2021 is not colonialism but 500 years of Christian faith. As Bishop Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan emphasized, the fact that Filipinos eventually repudiated colonial rule but

continued to embrace Christian faith even after they won the revolution against Spain could only mean that they did not equate Christianity with colonialism. At some point, the faith that they had embraced was no longer alien to them. It had succeeded in taking root on the fertile ground of their innate spirituality as a people.

It should be remembered in context that the mentality and purpose of the explorers of the time were for the colonialist countries—Spain and Portugal—to extend their power to the lands newly discovered. The same kind of mentality was true of other European colonizers. Today's consciousness cannot be imposed in judging the mindset in the period of colonization.

Still, one should not fail to appreciate what the early missionaries did to promote the good of the natives. For one, the early missionaries acted as the conscience of the colonizers. Following the example of Fray Bartolome de Las Casas and Francisco de Vittoria in the Americas, Manila Bishop Domingo Salazar and the missionaries denounced the abuses that were committed and questioned the subjugation of the natives.

The missionaries learned the language of the natives and adapted the Christian faith to their beliefs and practices. They developed the native culture by writing dictionaries and grammar books, and established schools. They supervised the building not only of churches but also of towns, roads, and bridges. They were instrumental in uniting the many islands and regions under the common Christian faith. Their presence likewise checked the spread of Islam and the attack of Moro marauders.

Even the nationalistic movement against the Spanish rule was inspired by the Christian teaching of the paschal mystery of Christ. This included the native Filipino clergy like Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora (GOMBURZA), revolutionaries like Andres Bonifacio, and intellectuals like Jose Rizal. Our heroes offered their lives for the liberation of the oppressed people.

Catholicism was so engrained in Filipinos that even Protestantism introduced by the American missionaries was not able to replace it.

PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

The bishops of the Philippines refer to the year 2021 as a year of great jubilee for the Church in the Philippines. To prepare for it, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) spearheaded "a nine-year journey for the New Evangelization," with a different theme for each year, recalling the Polish episcopate's "great novena" (1957-66) in commemoration of the 1,000th anniversary of the evangelization of Poland—an initiative that strengthened Catholic identity during the Communist era.

GIFTED TO GIVE

The logo of the celebration, dubbed "500YOC," carries the theme "Gifted to Give." This is based on Matthew's Gospel where Jesus commissions the Twelve (Apostles) to proclaim the Kingdom of heaven to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (10:8).

On November 29, 2020, the CBCP came out with its Pastoral Letter marking 2021 as Year of *Missio ad Gentes*. The Bishops noted: "As the theme chosen by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for this fifth centennial notes: all Christians are 'gifted to give.' This 'giftedness' motivated generous missionaries over the centuries; it must also enflame the hearts of all of us today to engage in mission here at home and in other countries (*missio ad gentes*). Indeed, this is part of Jesus' mission mandate to his disciples: 'What you have received as a gift, give as a gift' (Mt 10:8). We pray for a *missionary renewal* of our Church—both at home (*ad intra*) and beyond our borders

(ad extra) during our celebration of the 500 years—and into the future!"

Pope Francis is appreciative of the "gift" of Filipinos to the universal Church. On December 15, 2019, he celebrated the first *Simbang Gabi* at Saint Peter's Basilica. Fr. Ricky Gente, chaplain of Filipinos in Rome, noted in that gathering: "Almost 500 years ago, European missionaries planted the seed of faith in our beloved Philippines. We are happy and blessed because after five centuries, we are here in Europe and throughout the world, transmitting the joy and beauty of the Gospel."

In his homily in that Mass, the Pope acknowledged the role of Filipino migrant workers in the growth of Catholicism, saying that while the *Simbang Gabi* has been held in the Philippines for centuries, "in recent decades, thanks to Filipino migrants, this devotion has crossed national borders and has arrived in many other countries." The Pope also told the Filipinos to "continue being smugglers of faith," referring to how overseas Filipino workers "smuggle" their faith even to places where it is dangerous to be Catholic. He added: "You, dear brothers and sisters, who have left your land in search of a better future, have a special mission. Your faith should be leaven in the parish communities to which you belong. Today I encourage you to increase opportunities for meeting to share your culture and spiritual wealth while at the same time allowing yourselves to be enriched by the experiences of others."

PILGRIMAGE TO JUBILEE CHURCHES AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS

The spread of COVID-19 has greatly affected the immediate preparation and actual celebration of the Quincentennial of the Christian faith. Though trimmed down, the celebrations have pushed through. On February 25, 2021, Pope Francis granted Plenary Indulgences to Filipinos visiting over 500 Jubilee Churches across the country at any time until April 22, 2022. The Vatican requests pilgrims going to Jubilee Churches to pray "for the fidelity of the Filipino people to their Christian calling, for the increase of priestly and religious vocations, and for the defense of the family, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, the profession of faith, and an invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary."

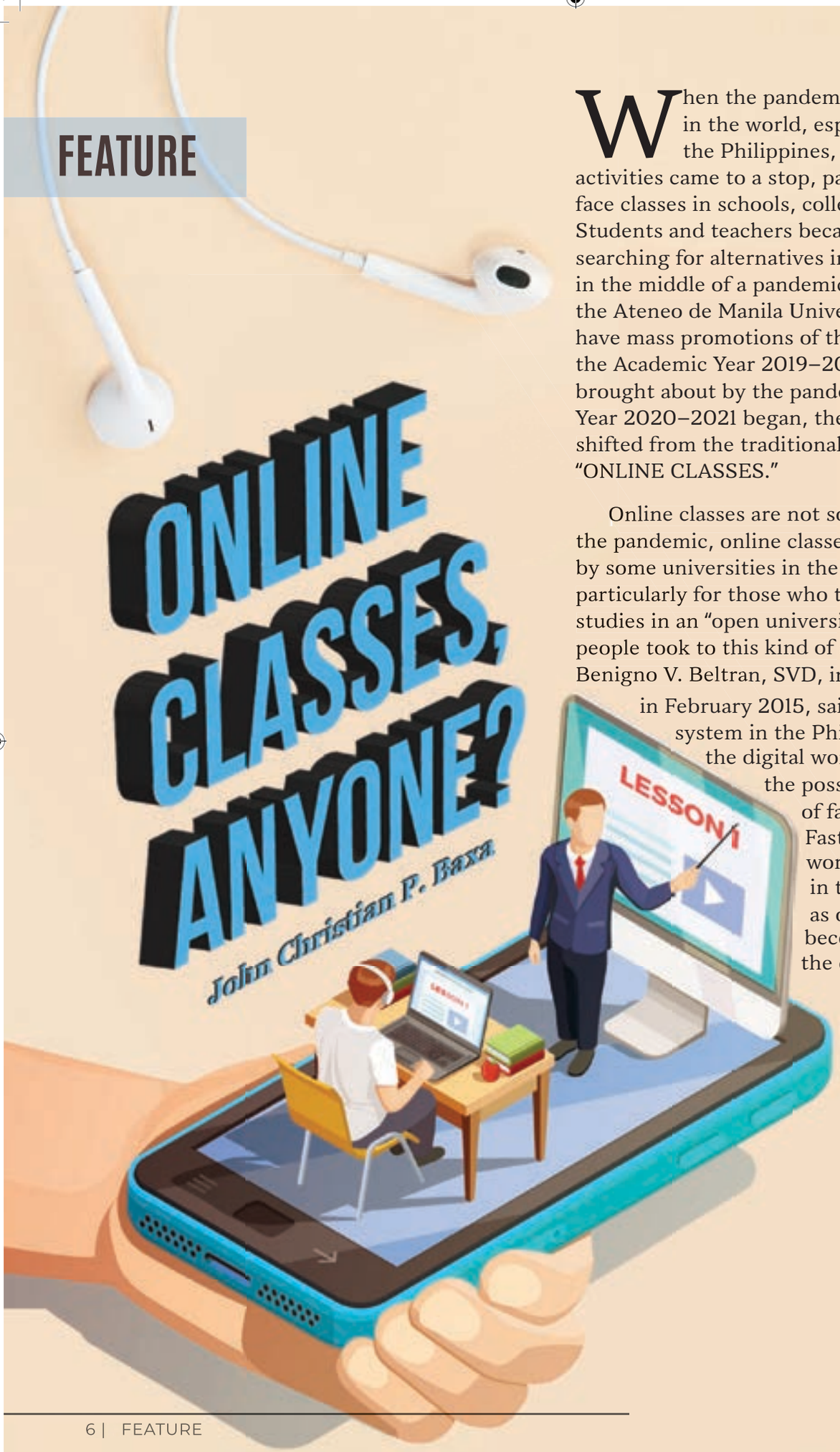
On March 14, 2021, Pope Francis himself presided over a truly festive Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter's Basilica to commemorate the arrival of Christianity in the country. Because of the pandemic, only 180 Filipinos, headed by Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, could participate in the celebration. Many wore the traditional Filipino attire, and the procession of the cross and the statue of the Sto. Niño was accompanied by Filipina dancers. Commenting on the Gospel passage, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (Jn 3:16), Pope Francis, in his homily, said that this is the heart of the Gospel, the source of our joy. This joy, he added, "is evident in your people. We see it in your eyes, on your faces, in your songs and in your prayers... I want to thank you, then, for the joy you bring to the whole world and to our Christian communities."

Dioceses have had different ways of celebrating. For example, there was the visit of the Sto. Niño de Cebu to Limasawa in Southern Leyte. The pilgrim image left the Basilica Minore on March 29 for Maasin City where a festive procession and a day-long celebration was held in its honor. Then there was the fluvial parade to Limasawa, the site of the first Catholic Mass in the Philippines on March 31, 1521.

In this digital age, Filipinos are turning to social media to learn and spread the message of the Jubilee. The anniversary theme song We Give Our Yes, composed by Fr. Carlo Marcelo and sung by Jamie Rivera, is being posted online in different versions and dialects. Other videos on the celebration are posted on Facebook, YouTube, and other digital platforms.

ONLINE CLASSES, ANYONE?

John Christian P. Baxa



When the pandemic COVID-19 erupted in the world, especially here in the Philippines, many of our daily activities came to a stop, particularly face-to-face classes in schools, colleges, and universities. Students and teachers became anxious and began searching for alternatives in continuing classes in the middle of a pandemic. Some schools, like the Ateneo de Manila University, decided to have mass promotions of their students after the Academic Year 2019–2020 to ease the stress brought about by the pandemic. When Academic Year 2020–2021 began, the mode of teaching shifted from the traditional face-to-face classes to "ONLINE CLASSES."

Online classes are not something new. Before the pandemic, online classes were being offered by some universities in the country and outside, particularly for those who take up postgraduate studies in an "open university." But very few people took to this kind of academic mode. Fr. Benigno V. Beltran, SVD, in an educational forum in February 2015, said that the educational system in the Philippines could shift to the digital world that would lead to the possibility of the absence of face-to-face classes. Fast forward now, his words are being fulfilled in this pandemic era, as online classes have become mandatory in the country.

My classmates and I are into this mode of learning. It is something new and can be exhausting. It is more asynchronous than synchronous, so the students have ample time to study and to learn at a time suitable to them.

Online classes in this time of pandemic have both positive and negative effects. Students are obliged to read the materials given by their professors, and this heightens their intellectual imagination on certain subjects taught in the real situation of the people. Being critical of certain issues that they read about is beneficial to their intellectual development that they can use in their future endeavors as priests, consecrated men and women, workers in the academe or in other professions.

Online learning, on the other hand, can make the life of students stressful. This is due to several factors. One is poor internet connection. There were times when we could not understand what our professors were saying, or we could not follow the discussions. This also prevented some students from submitting the requirements on time. Some professors were understanding, but some others were strict and did not give any consideration.

The second factor is poor environment. I am lucky because in our community's residence we have adequate facilities for online classes. But how about other students, especially laypeople who have no adequate space and time for study? Many students cannot concentrate on their class because of so much noise, humid climate, and household tasks.

Thirdly, online classes eat a chunk of our other scheduled activities, particularly in formation. Class requirements with submission deadlines and scores of learning materials to read or to watch at every session take up ample time meant for religious practice. In my community, Theology students are told to strike a balance in our studies, apostolate, and other community observances. But with the pandemic, working this out is quite difficult, considering the many academic requirements and deadlines to meet. In this situation, from 60 to 70 percent of the day is consumed by online classes.

Lastly, online classes do affect one's physical and mental health. Students may end falling into depression, overwhelmed by the class requirements. Some even commit suicide. Teachers and professors may suffer anxiety and depression due to the pressure of preparing their lessons or of making digital PowerPoint presentations. Overnight they are expected to be computer literate. On the other hand, online classes affect physical health, with students having insomnia or resorting to eating unhealthy food as they stay late at night in doing their assignments. They can easily get sick or lose energy.

If, as a postgraduate student, I have difficulty in this new mode of learning, I ask myself: How about ordinary students who do not enjoy the same facilities as I? How about young people who are in the peripheries or in far-flung areas, with poor internet connections? How about those who cannot afford to acquire gadgets or laptops, and to pay internet bills or loads for internet data? Given these factors in this time of pandemic, students may not achieve the best quality of education, not even a better one.

Digital technology is a great human achievement and, as such, a grace from God. It can be used as a new way of evangelization. It makes communication possible at a time when people keep physical distance from one another to avoid the spread of the virus. Online classes make it possible for education to continue despite the many inherent difficulties. There will be a place for digital education even when face-to-face classes will resume as the country emerges from the pandemic. Indeed, nothing can compare with the traditional face-to-face classes where one can learn by interacting with one's teachers and classmates, have access to the library, and have an ambiance for learning. I pray that we can return to the "normal" way of face-to-face education soon. But digital education is here to stay, and it can complement and enrich the "classical" mode of education—complement, I say, but not replace it.



TRAILBLAZERS:

AMID RESTRICTIONS, LST-ADMU STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY

Ian Gabriel Ceblano, SSP, and Ed Colmenares, SJ

Not even the pandemic can stop the students of Loyola School of Theology-Ateneo de Manila University (LST-AdMU) from loving and serving. As the number of COVID-19 cases rises, LST students turn to their creativity in doing their respective apostolate.

As early as March 2020, Ateneo DREAM Team, *Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan* (SLB) joined forces to conduct various relief operations. They distributed family grocery packs to various families and communities around the country. The relief packs were assembled by the various Jesuit communities on campus, San Jose Seminary, and several faculty and staff of AdMU. They provided hot meals for medical frontliners in selected hospitals in National Capital Region, like Philippine General Hospital, Lung Center of the Philippines, Mandaluyong Medical Center, National Bilibid Prison, and Jose Reyes Medical Center. They also sent medical supplies like personal protective equipment (PPEs), face shields, masks, and alcohol to over 150 hospitals all over the country. Some of the face shields were assembled by the Jesuits and San Jose seminarians who were on campus during ECQ last year. The coalition also engaged in relief operations when our country was hit by typhoons Rolly and Ulysses. They launched Project *Panunuluyan* that housed on-campus several frontliners from the Quirino Memorial Medical Center.

Other projects were done in preparation for the 2022 national elections. National Situationers, Discernment Circles, and *Kuwentuhang Bayan* were launched. These are ongoing programs organized by SLB upon the invitation of communities, schools, and other organizations as they gear their efforts towards voters' registration,

elections, and social engagement. Aside from the aforementioned initiatives, the LST community continues to support the community pantries in the Mother of Divine Providence Parish and the San Pedro Calungsod Mission Area in Payatas. They likewise help out in the feeding program of the San Pedro Calungsod Mission Area.

As in many dioceses, religious and diocesan students of LST immediately turned to online Masses and other programs to cater to the increasing pastoral needs of Filipino Catholics who had suddenly lost direct spiritual nourishment, normally provided by parishes and mission areas. They launched different initiatives in social media to help alleviate the physical, psychological, and spiritual distress experienced by many Filipinos. Several Jesuit scholastics helped in the *Sandaline* of UGAT. This is an online platform that provides crisis intervention and counseling for Filipinos. The Society of St. Paul initiated *Sambuhay Interaktib, Bless Me Father, Dear Pablito,* and *Saint Paul National Bible Quiz's Faith or Fake,* programs that accompany the faithful virtually in their day-to-day struggles in the light of Scriptures and the Eucharist.

These initiatives pioneered by LST-AdMU students and collaborators are explicit manifestations of the 2015 Vision-Mission of LST — "to form priests, theologians, and pastoral ministers who effectively respond to the ecclesial, spiritual, and social concerns of an increasingly missionary Church in Asia." Indeed, LST never fails to prepare its students to face the challenges posed not only by postmodernity in the Asian context, but also by unexpected turn of events, like the scourge of pandemic COVID-19. True to their word, LST-AdMU students will go, ever ready, "where there is greater need."







CREATION AND THE MYSTERY OF SIN AND EVIL

Tu Ja, SJ

INTRODUCTION

The writer deeply appreciates and thanks Loyola School of Theology (LST) and Arrupe International Residence (AIR) for the nourishment and empowerment of theological knowledge, wisdom, and insight through theological courses and sound Jesuit formation by both faculty members and formators in LST and in AIR during four years of theological studies and formation.

This paper will answer three questions: (1) Why does God permit this pandemic? (2) Where is God in this COVID-19 pandemic? and (3) Where does evil come from? These are questions raised by many people, and the answers in this paper are directed to the faith-based community, particularly the Catholic community.

I. ESSENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANT DEFINITION OF CREATION

According to the studies that have been developed and appropriated through the Genesis creation account, there are three characteristics of creation: free, orderly, and good. First, *creation is free*. To be created means *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*. In *creatio ex nihilo*, God created everything out of nothing (J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, 19), but it is out of love and gratuitousness. Every creature is absolutely dependent on God. In *creatio continua*, God's creative activity continues; divine providence exists in time (*The Christian Faith*, 413), along with the purpose and design of creation that God freely, intentionally, and purposefully willed. In *creatio ex amore*, God freely and gratuitously created the universe out of love. Love motivated the coming to be of creatures. Each creature is a spark of divine life and love. In *creatio ad amorem*, God intentionally and purposefully creates and recreates us. We are being created towards the direction of divine life and love.

Second, *creation is orderly*. *Dabar Yahweh*—God created the universe through his word of command, put order and life in communion and relationship. *Dabar Yahweh* is also word of law and order in the sense that the universe lives and moves according to how God declares what should be and how it should be. In laws of nature, creation is intelligible and good; created things and societies have their own laws and values, regularities, processes, structures, and interrelationships which we must gradually come to know, use, and organize according to the will of God (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 36).

Third, *creation is good*. God found it good to create something outside of himself. The material world is good. In maintaining the universal goodness of creation, the early Church resisted Gnosticism, which rejected the material world as evil. "Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness—'And God saw that it was good... very good' for God willed creation as a gift addressed to man, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to him" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 299). Creation is birthed out of the goodness of the Creator, who himself explicitly says that what he has created is good.

In addition, God gives human beings co-creatorship (*imago Dei*), the power of freely sharing in his providence by entrusting them with the responsibility of "subduing" the earth and having dominion over it. God enables men to be intelligent and free to complete the work of creation (*Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, 341), to perfect its harmony for their own good and that of their neighbors (CFC, 357). Responsible

stewardship means that we have the moral obligation not only to use the earth's goods responsibly but also to treat them with real respect as gifts from our Creator (CFC, 348).

II. THE MYSTERY OF SIN AND EVIL

In Christian doctrine, after the act of creation, the mystery of evil and sin took place. In understanding sin, we have to take into account the relationship of man with God. Sin is a rejection of God's offer of faithful love. In the Old Testament, sin is seen as a crime, an internal and willful violation of Yahweh's covenant relationship. Rejecting God means rejection of our filial destiny (ultimate goal). God is inviting us to live in union with him, but we are free to accept or reject his invitation. Rejecting God also means rejecting others and ourselves. There is an inner link between them; in refusing God (wanting to make ourselves as god), we destroy ourselves because we become alienated from the truth of our being.

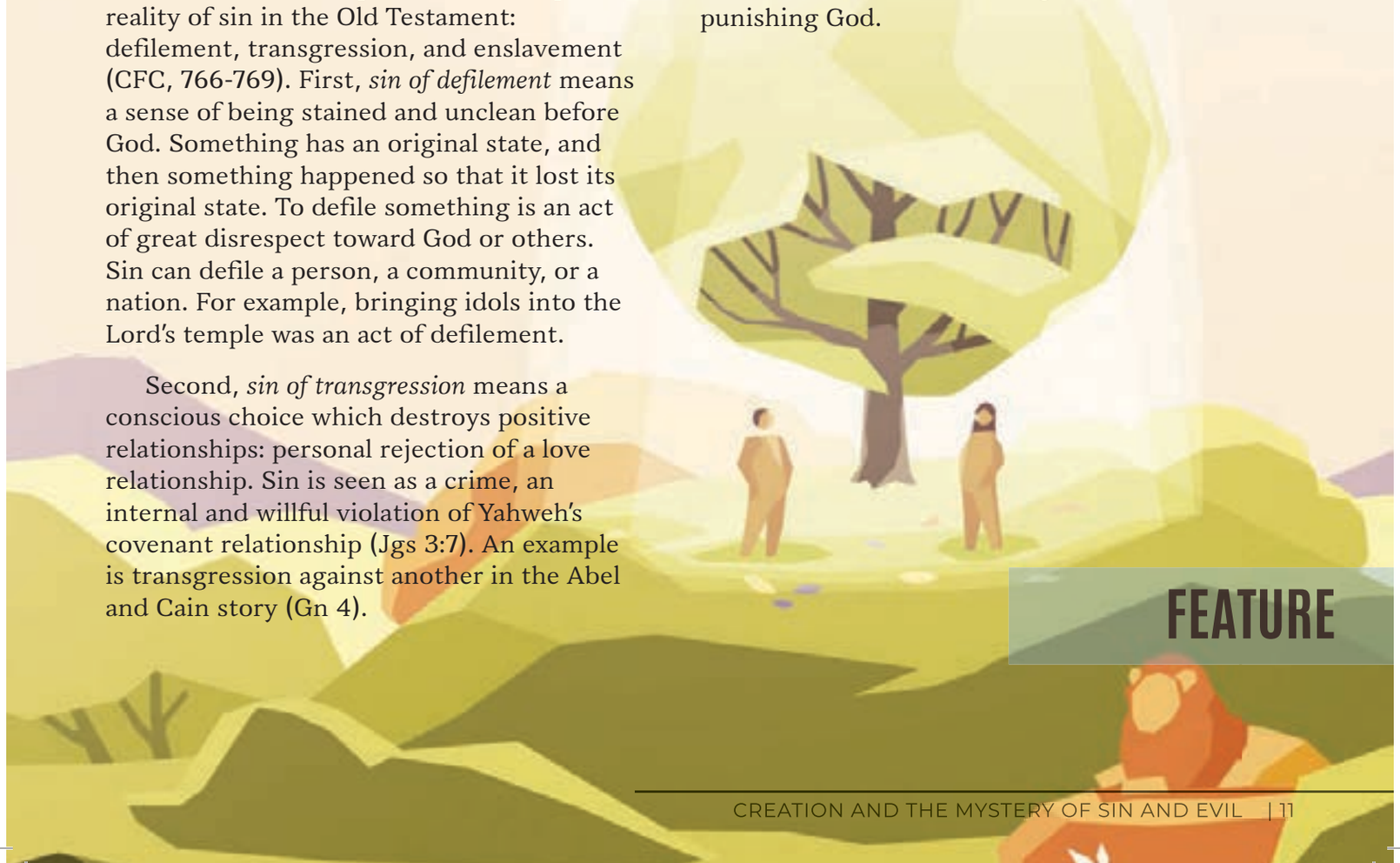
There are three aspects of the complex reality of sin in the Old Testament: defilement, transgression, and enslavement (CFC, 766-769). First, *sin of defilement* means a sense of being stained and unclean before God. Something has an original state, and then something happened so that it lost its original state. To defile something is an act of great disrespect toward God or others. Sin can defile a person, a community, or a nation. For example, bringing idols into the Lord's temple was an act of defilement.

Second, *sin of transgression* means a conscious choice which destroys positive relationships: personal rejection of a love relationship. Sin is seen as a crime, an internal and willful violation of Yahweh's covenant relationship (Jgs 3:7). An example is transgression against another in the Abel and Cain story (Gn 4).

Third, *sin of enslavement* means that the result of transgression is enslavement. It is a personal rejection or choice and rebellion against God. For instance, during the Israelites' wilderness journey after being freed from Egypt, the flaws in their thinking began to surface in their conduct. Within just two years, they rejected the righteous leadership of Moses, refusing to exercise their liberty to choose to enter the Promised Land and take it as their possession.

III. REFLECTIVE AND PASTORAL APPROACH IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In this time of COVID-19 crisis, many people are asking why God permits pandemic breakout. The word "permit" seems to be quite problematic to elaborate in this context. Without underestimating the question, the writer will answer based on theological knowledge, reflection, and insight. As starting point, it is crucial to have the right image of God. In this time of pandemic, many people give way to scruples that God is punishing human beings for the wrongdoings. It reflects a lot about the distorted image of God—as punishing God.



FEATURE

Hence, there is an urgent need to correct the distorted image of God. In the New Testament, Jesus introduces images of God's love to correct distorted images of God in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God is seen as punishing the Israelites for worshiping graven images of idols. Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son instead presents God as a merciful and forgiving Father (Lk 15:11-32). God's love is unconditional. God's love for us does not depend on our behavior; our sins do not lessen God's love, nor our good works increase God's love. God does not force us to love him; God invites us to communion with him. God is like a good shepherd who does not desire that anyone would be lost to sin, one who has compassion for sinners, who goes out of his way to bring the sinners back home to him.

The suffering image of God is reflected in giving his only Son that we may not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16). God's love for us is so great that in Jesus he is willing to suffer for us. God is always there to save us from suffering. God gives us freedom to choose. God accompanies us in time of our suffering, particularly in this COVID-19 crisis. In addition, the suffering is not the end in itself; there is always hope of life beyond suffering.

Secondly, in a more prudent and sincere way, people need to evaluate the contemporary lifestyle characterized by consumerism, individualism, anthropocentrism, and monopolism. Global consumerism leads to massive land-use. Pope Francis speaks of the tragedy of "throwaway culture" and proposes a lifestyle change (*Laudato Sì*, 20-22). The global market has made contemporary society drown in consumerism. The exceeding land-use for massive production has pushed more forests, animals, and other creatures, both small and big, into extinction. It has also caused air and water pollution from the chemical wastes. COVID-19 is a "clear warning shot," given that 75 percent of all infectious diseases come from wildlife, and climate change and the destruction of natural habitats are putting humans into ever-closer proximity to animals.

In most cases, human interventions cause the chaos to the biodiversity of the nature, particularly in this situation of COVID. "Human conduct is also leading to severe biodiversity loss, changing animal-human interaction and distorting ecosystem processes that regulate our planetary health and control many services that humans depend on."

Therefore, this pandemic signifies the urgency of conversion. In an interview on the *Querida Amazonia* Synod, Michael Cardinal Czerny, S.J., shares that the Church is to promote the ecological, social, cultural, pastoral dreams/conversions with healthy, sustainable, culturally sensitive, and future-oriented development. This is quite challenging and needs the response and participation of everyone. In going back to the Genesis account, as human beings, we need to respect and live in harmony with the orderly aspect of creation. Not to threaten anyone, but we are warned by the possibility of global climate change which will bring about the failure of crops and affect the lives of people globally. There will be no vaccine for this climate change.

In a straightforward language, it is time to say, "Enough is enough, we must act now!" There ought to be a transition toward a growth path, a healthy planet for future generations, a shift in the paradigm of production and consumption, which is at the core of all economic activities. The next phase of economic transformation should be more sustainable, with cleaner production and less material-intensive lifestyles.

IV. GOD IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

There are three groups of people at this time of pandemic: (1) people who are directly infected by COVID-19 and in critical conditions, (2) people whose family and relatives are infected, dead and grieving, and (3) people who are in lockdown and feel desperate and partly paranoid, with limited financial supply, and under threat

to get infected. They all have this common question: Where is God is in this pandemic crisis?

The writer would like to turn the question to how God makes himself present in this critical time. God is manifested in the faces of many people. In a more realistic and practical way, God is found in the faces of so many generous people who have been doing charitable deeds to the poor and the needy. God is present among frontliner medical doctors who choose to continue helping the patients tirelessly and selflessly though they have families of their own and they can get infected by the virus. A good number of medical doctors and nurses, in fact, have died from the virus infection. The God of love and compassion is at work through the hands of generous people.

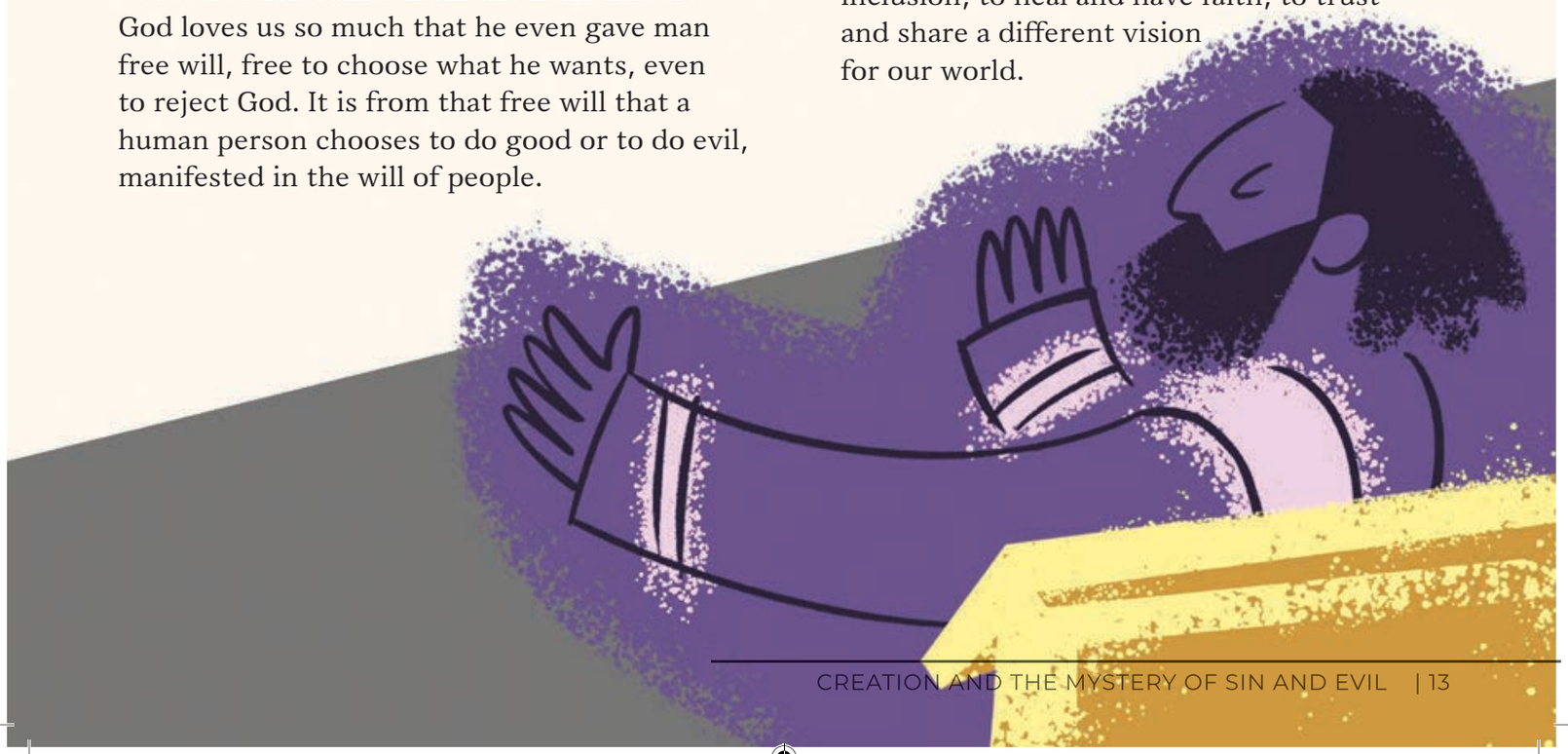
V. THE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL RELATED TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Suffering attacks our sense of self in different ways. It can cut us down to size and humble us before God. It can also make us wonder whether God is present or is on our side. We find that there is a way by which suffering can make us think more highly of what it means to be human. In a more theological and pastoral perspective, in this context of COVID-19, evil as destruction comes from the human heart. God loves us so much that he even gave man free will, free to choose what he wants, even to reject God. It is from that free will that a human person chooses to do good or to do evil, manifested in the will of people.

Evil lies behind COVID-19 breakout. People, enslaved by the desire for wealth, exploit nature for self-satisfaction and greed. The world has more billionaires than 20 years ago. The will for self-achievement and wealth pushes people to accumulate more, to exploit further without taking responsibility to sustain the health of mother earth. Scientists warn of disasters from global warming and global climate. Many people know and accept the fact that the earth is sick and needs healing. And yet people ignore the reality of our broken world and continue to drill and exploit the earth without restraint. People are to live with discerning spirit in the midst of challenges posed by defilement, transgression, and enslavement to sin.

CONCLUSION

As human beings, we need one another for growth; we are to support one another, and we need to come together globally as one in dealing with this COVID-19 crisis. This is the second worst global crisis after world financial crisis. We need to see this crisis as a time of conversion. We may not immediately go back to work or studies, but let us be open to grow with greater inclusion, to heal and have faith, to trust and share a different vision for our world.





THE EUCHARIST IN TIME OF PANDEMIC

Handrianus Masri, SX

INTRODUCTION

One effort to break the chain of the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak is by social-physical distancing, and, in concrete form, by staying at home. Churches have been closed or partially opened, following the instruction from the government and the bishops. Following livestreaming of Masses at home is one way of adjusting to the pandemic. Catholics attend the Eucharist celebration indirectly through livestreaming on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, or live broadcasting on TV. The series of celebrations for the Paschal Mystery during the Holy Week of 2020 and 2021 was shared in the same manner. Indeed, our faith, hope, and love cannot be extinguished even by the coronavirus. This reflection will delve on the theological significance of the Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery especially in the current situation of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery

There is a close relationship between the Eucharist and the life of the Church; the Eucharist "stands at the center of the Church's life" (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia,* 3). At the Last Supper, Jesus left a sacramental sign and commanded his disciples to preserve it for all time in his memory. The Church sees it as a very important legacy, celebrated by the believers since the beginning: "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The "breaking of the bread" refers to the Eucharist. While breaking the bread in the Eucharist, the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery that capsulizes the events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Jesus' Resurrection. Hence, in every celebration of the Eucharist, we are spiritually brought back to the Paschal Triduum (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia,* no. 3).

In the Eucharist, the Church continues the mission of Christ to save the world. Through the Eucharist, Christ is present, offering himself as a pleasing sacrifice to God, giving mankind the bread of life, and bringing the whole Church

to the hope of resurrection and eternal life. The Eucharist is "the source and summit of all Christian life" (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 11). There is no Church without the Eucharist, yet Christ has entrusted the Eucharist to the Church to present to humanity the gratuitous work of salvation.

Through the Eucharist, the Church is related to the risen Christ. The Church is connected both to the past (Jesus' death) and the future, the second coming of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26). The congregation that gathers becomes the visible dimension of Jesus Christ as Savior. In this regard, the desire to celebrate the Eucharist is the Church's desire for the Lord. In the Eucharist, Christ's saving event is manifested in the midst of the Church. This is what drives the Church to relentlessly remember and present Christ's sacrifice to the Father in a sacramental manner, in every community that offers it through the hands of ordained ministers (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 12). Herein lies the mystery of the Eucharistic celebration that transcends all human understanding, but at the same time also brings salvation to humans. Such faith is celebrated by the whole Church as thanksgiving that presents Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all. In this regard, through the Eucharist, Christ reconciles us with the Father. Thus, Christ's sacrifice which culminated on the cross becomes the hope and salvation that leads people to the purification of the soul, forgiveness of sins, and reception of the Holy Spirit (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17).

IMPORTANCE OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The Eucharist is important in the life of the Church because the Eucharist becomes a "remembrance of Christ" (Lk 22:19). Likewise, the Lord's meal becomes a reminder of his death, the impact of which is experienced by the congregation who are gathering (1 Cor 11:26). By eating bread and drinking wine, the believers enter into and become part of the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16). The Lord's Supper is a revelation or expression of faith in the person of Jesus Christ.

The congregation, by receiving the body and blood of Christ, are invited to direct their entire lives to full communion with Christ. Receiving the body and blood of Christ brings the Church together in the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ himself. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, which unites the whole Church with Christ by the action of the Spirit, the Church is brought in the hope of enjoying the heavenly banquet. This glorious eschatological hope is expressed in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is "the source and summit of all Christian life" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).

Moreover, the Eucharist is a sacrifice because the celebration of the Eucharist is a memory of Christ's Passover (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 1365). The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very word of institution: "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me... This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" (Lk 22: 19-20). On the cross, Christ gave up his body to be broken and poured out his blood as sacrifice for us his body, "shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28). So, the Eucharist is a sacrifice, because it makes present Jesus' sacrifice, giving himself up on the cross (CCC 1366).

The Eucharist is a living and pleasing sign of Christ's sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice happened once and for all on the cross (Heb 10:10). The memory or anamnesis of salvation that took place through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in the Eucharist celebrates the past and the present and anticipates the future. Thus, the Eucharist is celebrated beyond time and space. It is not limited to the place of celebration, nor can there be a period when it ends. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, it remembers the Paschal Mystery through which the salvific plan of our loving God is presented. Hence, the sacrifice that Christ offered on the cross once and for all always remains effective (Heb 7:27).

Furthermore, every time the mystery of the Passover of Christ is celebrated in the Eucharist, the Church presents the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave his body and blood as a ransom for all human sins, overcame the eternal death, and reconciled us with the Father (J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, The Christian Faith, 648).

The mystery of redemption is present in the form of the Eucharist. Jesus who sacrificed himself on the cross is the same Christ who gave his body and blood in the Eucharist. There is a union between Jesus' "bloody" sacrifice on the cross and Jesus' offering his body and blood to his disciples at the Last Supper. The Church that welcomes Jesus' sacrifice sacramentally manifests the redemptive power of Christ in his life and in his glorious resurrection.

LIVESTREAMING AS AN INNOVATIVE PASTORAL EFFORT

In celebrating the Eucharist, the Church underlines the participation of the people carried out by their respective duties and roles (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 28). Through participation in the Eucharist, the people are united with one another and gathered together with and in Christ. John Paul II explains this unifying reason: "Our union with Christ, the gift and grace of each of us, enables us to share in him in the unity of his body, the Church" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 23).

In special circumstances, if a person cannot be physically present during the celebration of the Eucharist, union with Christ and with the Church continues. This spiritual union has two dimensions: the invisible and the visible. The invisible dimension is the union with the Father which takes place in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit and among believers. The visible dimension is unity with the teachings of the Apostles, with the sacrament, and with the hierarchy of the Church. In this context, the absence of people due to emergency reasons can be understood. Thus, physical absence does not break the union that Christ gave his people.

During this "emergency" time of COVID-19, the Church's hierarchy turns to technological advancements to help people who cannot attend the Mass. In hospitals, speakers have been connected to microphones in chapels. Masses are broadcast via television in real-time or recorded. Dioceses and parishes use internet technology by livestreaming.

UNITY WITH CHRIST IN THE "MISSED COMMUNION"

Participation in the Holy Sacrifice makes the believers' heart resemble Christ's own, sustains their strength in the pilgrimage of life, makes them yearn for eternal life, and unites them even now to the Church in heaven (CCC 1419). However, the harsh conditions and dangers due to the pandemic prevent Christians from celebrating the Eucharist physically. Still, the desire to attend the Eucharist brings about the fruits of Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council teaches that when people do not have the opportunity to receive communion, the general priesthood of the faithful is carried out "in prayer and gratitude, by witnessing to the holy life, by denying oneself and active love" (Lumen Gentium, 10). The community that "gathers" before a livestreaming celebration of the Eucharist experiences the living presence of the Lord and unites with the Church, praying to God for the suffering world, for those who suffer from coronavirus, for the frontliners, and for many other vulnerable and affected people. Following the livestreaming of the Eucharist is a way of showing our solidarity and compassion with the suffering world, a way of presenting to God our "helpless" reality as human beings. We also pray for our healing and that of the whole world. We are closely united with the whole Church that sees Christ's suffering in this pandemic (*The Christian Faith*, 1511). It is only in faith that we will be able to experience "becoming more and more like Jesus" who suffered.

BECOME A LIVING EUCHARIST LIKE FRONTLINERS

During this time of the pandemic, we appreciate most the dedication and service of the frontliners.

They are showing us an example of being a "living Eucharist." Because of their sacrifice, they become a living Eucharist which is Christ's own sacrifice. They give and risk their lives for the sake of others. Just like the bread that is broken and shared, their life is offered for the sake of others. Their services make present the institutional words of Jesus: "This is my body, which will be given for you" (Lk 22:19). Their lives have become a living Eucharist. They show us what it means to be a Eucharistic person, living in communion with God who suffers through and in others.



CONCLUSION

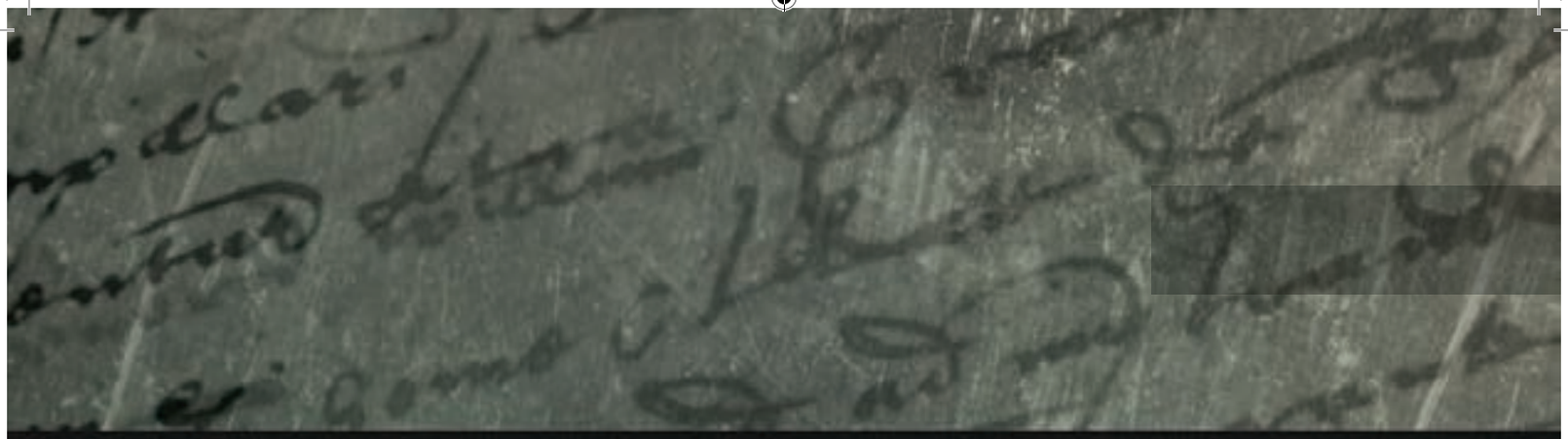
The Eucharist is the living heart of the Church; without the Eucharist, the Church dies, bereft of Christ's Spirit. The Eucharist is celebrated as a tangible manifestation of the Church's loyalty to Christ who gave his body and blood as a sacrifice and as ransom for humanity. Jesus' self-sacrifice took place once and for all. The Eucharistic action of the Church makes present this sacrifice of Christ here and now, making it everlasting and effective.



The impossibility of people to be physically present to attend the Eucharist does not reduce or eliminate the unity with the Lord. Through livestreaming of the Mass, believers enter into fellowship with the Lord who loves them. Interior or "spiritual" communion makes possible the intimate union in faith, hope, and love, and further increases the believers' desire for physical union with Christ himself and with one another.

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THE AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS AND THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Fr. Emilio Edgardo Quilatan, OAR

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Philippines, "discovered" by Ferdinand Magellan for Spain in 1521, was officially incorporated into the Spanish Empire under King Philip II in 1565. The king himself ordered an expedition from Mexico under the command of Miguel López de Legazpi to proceed to the Philippines and conquer the islands. They set sail in 1564, with the first group of Augustinian friars among those on board. The ships reached Cebu on February 13, 1565, and the evangelization of the Philippines began. The vast mission field in the archipelago required more missionaries to work. The Spanish crown ordered the following religious orders to go to the Philippines: the Franciscans (1578), the Jesuits (1581), and the Dominicans (1587).[1] In 1594, King Philip II issued a royal decree to Governor-General Luís Pérez-Dasmariñas that assigned the missionary orders in the Philippines by regions and provinces. Three years later, Governor-General Francisco Tello de Guzmán reported to King Philip II that the distribution of the orders had been fully implemented.[2] The division of the archipelago among the religious missionary orders ushered in a systematic evangelization of the Philippines. However, lack of missionary personnel continued to plague the Philippine missions.

AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS: FOUNDATION

The Augustinian Recollects were the fifth group of missionaries who arrived in the Philippines in 1606. They were also known as "Recoletos" who traced their origins to the reform-minded Spanish Augustinians during the height of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the second half

of the sixteenth century. Those Spanish Augustinians were inspired by a collective desire for a more austere and perfect way of life. On December 5, 1588, the provincial chapter of the Augustinian Province, which was held in Toledo, Spain, granted legal recognition to them. Moreover, they were allowed to open three or more monasteries in Spain for men and women who aspired to the Augustinian Recollect way of life. As their numbers increased, more monasteries were established in Castile, Spain.[3] Fray Luis de León, an Augustinian friar and scholar, wrote the first Constitution for the Augustinian Recollects, the "*Forma de Vivir*" (Way of Life). Its fourteen chapters encapsulated the charism of the Augustinian Recollection, that is, directed towards ascetic living and the intensification of contemplative and communitarian life. On February 11, 1602, the Recollect monasteries were organized as a province with their own Prior Provincial but subject to the Augustinian Prior General in Rome. Between 1602 and 1621, more monasteries were opened in Spain and the Philippines. On June 5, 1621, the Augustinian Recollection was elevated to a semi-autonomous Congregation under the Augustinian Prior General in Rome. Full autonomy was granted to the Augustinian Recollects only when Pope Pius X elevated the Augustinian Recollection to a Religious Order on September 16, 1912.

MISSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Augustinian Recollects responded to the call of the Church to meet the urgent demand to evangelize the Philippines. They sent ten priests and four religious brothers to pioneer the mission. On May 12, 1606, 13 reached Cebu. One priest had died at sea on their journey from Guam. From 1606 to 1610, the Augustinian Recollects accomplished the following: first, they opened their first house in Bagumbayan (now Luneta Park); and second, they opened their first mission fields that cover the present provinces of Bataan, Zambales, and Western Pangasinan



(1606-1679/1712-1925). Other Recollect houses were opened and served as bastions of spiritual and conventual life in the archipelago. Those houses were: Intramuros (1608/9), Cavite Puerto (1616), San Sebastian (1621), and Cebu (1621). In 1621, as the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollects, all houses and missions in the Philippines were organized as a religious province under the patronage of St. Nicholas of Tolentine. The Province of St. Nicholas had a unique status in the Congregation in that while the Augustinian Recollect communities in Spain were definitely contemplative and conventual, their communities in the Philippines were strictly missionary but without neglecting contemplation and community life.[4]

When the Augustinian Recollects arrived in the Philippines in 1606, the archipelago was already divided into mission districts as they had been entrusted to the Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans since 1594. The Augustinian Recollects were entrusted mission territories having the following characteristics: firstly, they were given the most remote areas to evangelize; secondly, their missions were bereft of government concern and assistance; thirdly, their *visitas* or mission bases were isolated from each other; and lastly, their mission centers, especially Palawan, Mindoro, Romblon, and Masbate, were often highly exposed to frequent pirate incursions





coming from Mindanao.[5] The Augustinian Recollects accepted whatever was given to them and were motivated to accomplish them, as they were intent on the conversion of souls in rendering "great service to God."[6]

From 1610 until the eve of the Philippine Revolution, more Augustinian Recollect missionaries came to the Philippines as more souls were added to their spiritual care. In 1622, the Cebu diocese entrusted the eastern half of Mindanao, northern Palawan, and the Calamianes to the pastoral care of the Recollects. Other difficult mission territories were added to the pastoral solicitude of the Recollects: Romblon-Banton-Tablas (1635-1933), Mindoro (1679-1936), and Masbate-Ticao-Burias (1687-1791). The Franciscans, due to lack of personnel, ceded to the Recollects their missions in Binangonan de Lampon, Baler, Casiguran, and Palanan de Cagayan, areas that are now in the Provinces of Aurora and Quezon. The Augustinian Recollects sustained these missions from 1658 to 1704.[7] In the eighteenth century the colonial government ordered the Recollects to accept the missions in Central Luzon, particularly the mission of Mabalacat, Pampanga (1713-1898), where it became the Recollect mission station that opened other missions in Tarlac — Bamban, Capas, O'Donnell, and Moriones. The missions in Tarlac also catered to the spiritual needs of the Aetas.[8] In the Diocese of Nueva Cáceres, the Recollects took over the parishes of Bulusan, Casiguran, and Donsol in Sorsogon from 1760 until 1768.[9] Later, in 1795, the Recollects accepted the pastoral administration of Las Piñas.[10]

The Augustinian Recollects ministered to two towns in Panay Island from 1761 to 1768, namely, Bátan (Aklan) and Mambusao (Capiz). In the Visayas, the island of Siquijor, located beside Negros Oriental, was entrusted to the Recollects, and they arrived there in 1794.[11] In Cebu Island, the Recollects received from the Augustinians the town of Danao (1747) and administered the parishes of Mandaue (1846), Liloan (1846), and Catmon (1856). Moreover, the Recollects founded in Cebu the towns of Carmen (1851), Compostela (1863), and Consolacion (1871). In the Camotes Islands near Cebu, the Recollects administered Poro Island (1848) and Pilar Island (1859), and founded a town in San Francisco Island (1863).[12]

More mission territories were entrusted to the Augustinian Recollects when the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish dominions by King Charles III. In 1768, some of their former missions were given to the Recollects: the western part of Mindanao, Basilan Island, Bohol, Marinduque, and the Marianas Islands. In 1848, the colonial government entrusted to the Recollects the

evangelization and development of Negros. In the second half of the eighteenth century, more parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila were entrusted the Augustinian Recollects. This was due to the Royal Decree of July 31, 1860, when Queen Isabel II ordered the Recollects to vacate the whole Mindanao missions and handed them back to the Jesuits. In another Royal Decree dated September 10, 1861, the same monarch declared that, "the Augustinian Recollects are to receive parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila – Rizal, Cavite, Batangas and Laguna – once they become vacant" to compensate the loss of their missions in Mindanao.[13]

From 1606 to 1896, the Augustinian Recollects did their best as "pastors of souls" to the Filipino people. They evangelized the locals while facing dangers from native revolts and attacks of pirates, from sickness and disease, and from shipwrecks and natural calamities. They endured limited resources, the great distance of their mission territories, and sometimes complications in dealing with the colonial government with whom they had some disagreements on the matters of defense of the missions against pirates and the collection of tributes from the native population. In spite of the aforementioned problems and difficulties, the Recollects successfully and painstakingly transformed the missions assigned to them into prosperous towns and parishes. Before the start of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, the Recollects took care of 1,249,399 souls in 203 towns from 20 provinces in the archipelago. The Augustinian Recollects ranked second to the Augustinians in their evangelization efforts in the Philippines, and because of their pastoral care for the natives, Nick Joaquin called the Augustinian Recollects "Pastors of the Philippine Mission."[14]

ST. EZEKIEL MORENO (1848-1906): AN AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT SAINT AMONG FILIPINOS

St. Ezekiel Moreno spent 15 fruitful years of his priesthood as an Augustinian Recollect missionary in the Philippines (1870-1885). He was one of the founders of Puerto Princesa (Palawan). He was an outstanding missionary and model pastor. He was ordained a priest in Manila on June 2, 1871. As a missionary, he was infected with malaria while doing mission work in Palawan (1871-1872). The tropical illness did not hinder the saint from dispensing his pastoral and missionary duties. He was assigned to Mindoro (1872-1876), Las Piñas (1876-1879), Sto. Tomas in Batangas (1879-1880), and Sta. Cruz in Manila (1880-1882). He was made administrator and prior of the Recollect hacienda in Imus, Cavite, in 1882. During the cholera epidemic, from November to December 1882, St. Ezekiel assisted the sick and gave the last rites to dying victims. In 1885, he left the Philippines for Spain. His superiors assigned him to their novitiate in Monteagudo, in Navarra, as the local superior of the community. He served in that capacity for three years, from 1885 to 1888. Later, he volunteered as a missionary in Colombia. On January 2, 1889, St. Ezekiel and his fellow Spanish Augustinian Recollects arrived in the Colombian capital, Bogotá. Their mission was to revive the fledging Augustinian Recollection in Colombia



that was in danger of extinction. St. Ezekiel lived in Bogotà until 1894, the year he was assigned to the Recollect mission in Casanare. He was consecrated bishop on May 1, 1894, and became Vicar Apostolic of Casanare. Two years later, he became bishop of Pasto. The saint served there from 1896 to 1905. In 1905, symptoms of cancer of the nose and the palate started to manifest. The following year, Bishop Ezekiel left for Madrid, Spain, where he had two unsuccessful operations. Resigned to his condition, he decided to go back to the Recollect novitiate in Navarra. Arriving in Monteagudo on June 1, 1906, he chose a small upper room near the chapel with a gallery from which he could look down on the sanctuary and immediately see the tabernacle and the statue of Our Lady of the Way to whom he had always been particularly devoted to. He died on August 19, 1906.

Pope Paul VI beatified Ezekiel Moreno on November 1, 1975, at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. On October 11, 1992, Pope John Paul II canonized him in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He was declared "Patron Saint of Cancer Patients" and "Model Pastor of the Americas" during the Fifth Centenary of the Evangelization of the Americas.[15]

SIGNIFICANT AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

A. The Vigan Cathedral and Episcopal Palace

The present Vigan Cathedral and its old Episcopal Palace were constructed under the direction of the Augustinian Recollect Bishop Juan Ruiz de San Agustín, who served in the Episcopal See of Nueva Segovia from 1780 to 1796.[16] The construction of the cathedral lasted ten years, from 1790 to 1800. The cathedral has Baroque features with ranking cornice extending to the sidewalls. The two bell towers were built several meters away from the church. Its design was Italian inspired Baroque.[17] Moreover, the construction design of the cathedral was adapted to the region, which is prone to earthquakes. The Vigan Cathedral is one of the Spanish colonial churches that have been described as "earthquake baroque" due to its thick and massive walls. Huge buttresses reinforced the walls, and the height of the church is not too high.[18]

B. St. Joseph Church and the Bamboo Organ of Las Piñas

The church of Las Piñas, dedicated to St. Joseph the Worker, was built by Padre Diego Cera between 1795 and 1819. The church's façade is reminiscent of the early Renaissance.

Padre Diego Cera was a memorable figure to the people whom he loved and served, but he was best remembered for the famous "Bamboo Organ" which he built. Fr. Pedro Herce, Recollect historian, wrote:

> He [Cera] started his work by selecting carefully bamboos of different sizes, thickness, and texture. He then buried them in the sands on the beach. The bamboos upon exhumation, one year after, were intact. These bamboos were chosen to produce his strange project: to construct an organ in which the registrations were made of bamboo. The organ as it exists



today is 5 1/2 meters in height, with complete scales and 23 registrations. In 1822, the Bamboo Organ was installed in the church... It was and is the only one of its kind in the entire world.[19]

C. San Sebastián Basilica, Quiapo, Manila

The San Sebastian Basilica is an all-steel church that is famed as the first pre-fabricated structure to be erected in the Philippines. Engr. Genaro Palacios y Guerra designed this all-steel church to withstand the forces of nature. It was pre-fabricated in Binche, Belgium, and eight steamships transported the steel parts of the church to Manila.[20] The design of the church is Neo-Gothic Revival and is similar to the early English Lancet Gothic period that is characterized by tall and narrow lancet openings, projecting buttresses, pinnacles, and a steep pitched roof.[21]

On June 24, 1890, Pope Leo XIII raised the San Sebastian Church to the rank of Minor Basilica that is permanently attached to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy. It was the first church in the Philippines that was elevated to such status. The Basilica of San Sebastián was inaugurated on August 15, 1891. It houses the oldest image of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the Philippines. This Marian image arrived from Mexico in 1618, and it was enthroned at the San Sebastian Church on May 5, 1621. That same year, the first Carmel Confraternity was established in the church. Finally, Rome granted the Augustinian Recollects of the San Sebastian community the privilege and faculty to bless, impose, and promote the "Brown Scapular" in the Philippines until the arrival of the Carmelites after the Second World War.[22]

D. The Black Nazarene Devotion

Filipino Catholics throng the Basilica of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, Manila, every January 9 for the annual "Traslación" to commemorate the Augustinian Recollects' donation of the image of the Black Nazarene and its transfer to Quiapo Church.[23]





The Augustinian Recollect historians could not find any historical document that could give the exact date of the arrival of the image or images of the Black Nazarene. The image may have arrived in Manila between 1640 and 1650, or possibly earlier. It is also probable that the Augustinian Recollects brought two images of the Black Nazarene — one that was placed in one of the side altars of the Recollect church in Intramuros, and the other one was used for the procession in Intramuros every Palm Sunday. The second image was under the care of the Confraternity of Jesús Nazareno that was canonically established in the Recollect church in Intramuros in 1651. The Second World War destroyed much of Intramuros, including the San Nicolás de Toléntino Church of the Recollects. Only the image of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo survived.

FROM PROVINCE OF SAN NICOLAS DE TOLENTINO TO PROVINCE OF ST. EZEKIEL MORENO

On June 5, 1621, Pope Gregory XV elevated the Augustinian Recollection to the rank of a Congregation with its own Vicar General. From the thirteenth to the thirtieth of November of that same year, the Augustinian Recollects celebrated its first General Chapter in Madrid. One of the provisions of the General Chapter was the creation of the four provinces of the Congregation – three in Spain and one in the Philippines. For the Philippine Recollect Province, St. Nicholas of Tolentine was chosen as its titular patron. Moreover, the First General Chapter gave the St. Nicholas of Tolentine Province a peculiar character that is distinctive from the other three Recollect Provinces. While the three provinces in Spain were conventual, the Saint Nicholas Province was strictly missionary.

Additionally, the Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentine was the only Augustinian Recollect Province that was founded outside Spain. The Provincial Curia was located in Manila — first in Bagumbayan, then in Intramuros. The history of the province includes the following significant events:



First, the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentine was founded 100 years after Magellan discovered the archipelago and celebrated the first Easter Sunday Mass in the islands.

Second, for 345 years, the Province and its missionary friars contributed to the evangelization of the islands and were temporarily present in Japan (1623-1632) and Guam (1768-1898/1974-1989). However, during the Philippine Revolution (1898), the Province extended its missionary presence in Venezuela and Brazil in South America; and in the twentieth century, the Province opened missions in China (1924-present) and Taiwan (1963-present).

Third, the Province accepted and promoted native vocations to the religious and priestly life.



Dionisia and Cecilia Rosa Talangpaz, biological sisters, with the help of the Augustinian Recollects of San Sebastian Convent, Manila, established the Augustinian Recollect *Beaterio* (1725) catering to Filipino women's vocations, which later flourished and became the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters of the Philippines (1970). For Filipino men, there were few vocations in the first 300 years of the Province's history. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, more Filipino vocations were accepted, and four seminaries were built in response to the growing number.

Fourth, the Province saved the Augustinian Recollect Congregation from extinction when the Spanish Liberal and Anti-clerical government persecuted the church in Spain and closed most of its monasteries and cloistered convents. The Province's novitiate in Monteagudo, Spain, was spared from closure because it was the house of formation for Recollect missionaries sent to the Philippines.

Fifth, in the provincial chapter of 1940, the Province opened its doors officially to the educational apostolate and founded formal schools accredited by the American colonial government. In 1941, Santo Tomás de Villanova Institute in San Carlos, Negros Occidental, and San Sebastián College-Recoletos, Manila, opened their doors to the Filipino youth. Later, other schools were opened in the islands and two became universities — the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos in Bacolod City, and the University of San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City.

Sixth, on November 28, 1998, during the 52nd General Chapter held in Monachil, Granada, Spain, the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno was born from the Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentine. Thus, the spiritual-missionary torch was passed by the mother province to her daughter province, the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, comprised of the Philippines, Taiwan, and Sierra Leone. In 2019, Saipan and Indonesia were added.

At present, the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, to respond to the call of revitalization of the Order, commits itself towards deeper renewal and commitment as Augustinian Recollects. Since 2018, the Life and Mission Project (LAMP) of the Province has been defined in the following:

MISSION-VISION STATEMENT

In line with the OAR Life and Mission Project (LAMP) and guided by the Vision of the Order, we, as a Province, assume as our own the Mission "to live and proclaim the Gospel, bearing witness to a contemplative and fraternal life, at the service of the Kingdom and in a shared mission with lay people."

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Placing all our trust in God's Mercy, we, the Augustinian Recollects of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, desire to be creators of communion and witnesses to Gospel values through our consecrated life and service to humanity.

Endnotes:

1. Pablo Fernández, OP, History of the Church in the Philippines,1521-1898 (Manila: Life Today Publications, 1988), 19-25.

2. Antolín Abad, "Filipinas: Labor Misional y Pastoral" en Historia de la Iglesia en Hispano-america y Filipinas, II (Madrid: Biblioteca Autores Cristianos, 1992), 723.

3. The Augustinian Recollect houses established between 1589 and 1600 were the following: Talavera de la Reina (1589) in Toledo; Spain, Portillo (1590) and Nava del Rey (1591) in Valladolid; Madrid (1594); and El Toboso (1600) in Toledo. See Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, Vol. I: Desde orígines hasta el siglo XIX (Madrid: Editorial Augustinus, 1995), 190-203.

4. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, Vol. I, 359-361, 374-378.

5. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, The Order of Augustinian Recollects: Its Charismatic Evolution (Manila: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 1994), 50.

6. Crónicas I, 397-399 cited by Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, Vol. I: Desde orígines hasta el siglo XIX, 360. Partly translated to English by Prof. Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos.

7. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia, 398.

8. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia, 597-598.

9. Licinio Ruiz, ORSA, Sinopsis Historica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Toléntino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden delos Augstinos Descalzos, Vol. I (Manila: Tip. Pont. de la Univ. de Sto. Tomás), 606-610.

10. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, "Florilegio documental sobre el p. Diego Cera (1762-1832)" en Recollectio, Vol. VIII (1985), 277-353.

11. Ángel Martínez Cuesta, OAR, Historia, 599, 621.

12. Fidel de Blas, Labor Evangélica de los Padres Agustinos Recoletos en las Islas Filipinas expuesta en cuadros estadisticos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Toléntino (Zaragoza, España: Establecimiento tipográfico de Pedro Carra, 1910), 33-34.

13. Licinio Ruiz, Sinopsis Historica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Toléntino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden de Agustinos Descalzos, vol. II (Manila: Tip. Pont. de la Univ. de Sto. Tomás, 1925), 244; see Ángel Martínez Cuesta, Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, vol. II: El Siglo XIX (Madrid: Editorial Augustinus, 2015), 812-815; 840-850.

14. Nick Joaquin, Small Beer: "The 'Minor' Ones," Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 25, 1988.

15. Note: The years of St. Ezekiel's pastoral assignments are just estimates. For details see the saint's biography written by Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, Bishop Ezekiel Moreno An Augustinian Recollect Saint Among Filipinos. Quezon City: Agustinos Recoletos, 1993.

16. Francisco Sádaba, 268-269.

17. From this point on, the architectural descriptions of selected Augustinian Recollect Churches in the articles are taken from the book of Norma I. Alarcon, Philippine Architecture During the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1991), 254.

18. Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Volume I: Peoples of the Philippines, s.v. "Ilocano" by A. Azurin et al.; op. cit. Volume III: Philippine Architecture, s.v. "Vigan Cathedral" by R. Javellana.

19. Pedro Herce, ORSA, "The Recollects in the Philippines" in Boletín Eclesiastico de Filipinas, vol. XXXIX (Jan.-Feb., 1965), nos.435, 251.

20. Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, The Spires of San Sebastian (Manila: San Sebastian Parish, 1991), 60-66.

21. Alarcon, Philippine Architecture, 228-229.

22. José María Martínez, OAR and Nicolás Salvatierra, OAR, The Basilica of San Sebastian (Manila: Order of Augustinian Recollects, 1993), 123-130; Romanillos, The Spires of San Sebastian, 14-23. The Order of Discalced Carmelite Friars (OCD) of the Province Immaculate Heart of Mary, Washington, arrived in the Philippines in 1947. The Dutch Carmelites of the Ancient Observance (O. Carm.) arrived in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, in 1958. See The 2018-2019 Catholic Directory of the Philippines (Quezon City: CBCP-Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2018), 395, 399.

23. The word "traslación," i.e., transfer, became synonymous to the grand procession of the Black Nazarene every January 9.

FEATURE

THE BENEDICTINES

IN THE PHILIPPINES

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The Benedictines arrived in the Philippines towards the close of the 19th century. The pioneers of the Philippine Mission came from the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat in Barcelona, Spain. They came to do missionary and parish work in parishes established by the Jesuits in Surigao. Abbot Jose Deas y Villar led a delegation of eight priests and six brothers who arrived in Manila in the morning of 12 September 1895 and stayed temporarily in Sta. Ana with the community of the Society of Jesus. On 25 April 1896, the monks were able of acquire a house at Balmes St., Tanduay, which would be their home base in Manila.

The Benedictines stayed in Surigao from May 1896 to September 1909, when they turned over parishes to the "Dutch Fathers"—Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Within that period, the Philippine Revolution against Spain (1896-98) broke out, and the Americans took over from Spain (1898), sparking the Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

With the US annexation of the Philippines, a colonial period under the Americans started, and Protestant influence in education in the Philippines commenced. Even before the transfer of the Surigao Mission to the Sacred Heart missionaries, Father Superior Fr. Juan Sabater (who succeeded Abbot Deas), in December 1900, thought of counteracting the American Protestant influence by establishing a school. This educational institution was for the defense of the Catholic Faith. It was also a way to sustain the monastic community with suitable work for its members. After overcoming several obstacles, such as the lack of trained personnel, finances, permit to operate, suitable place, and the uncertainty of the future, trusting in Divine Providence, the Benedictine Community in Manila approved

the establishment of a school, named after the great English Benedictine scholar and saint, St. Bede the Venerable. On 17 June 1901, *El Colegio de San Beda* opened its gates in Arlegui with Fr. Silvestre Jofre, the first Rector, celebrating the opening Mass at six in the morning. Dom Jesus Y. Mercado designed the first college seal in 1916. Patterned on the medal of St. Benedict, it had "COLEGIO DE SAN BEDA" inscribed on the circumference (instead of the original medal's Latin initials). The red and white flag of the *Confradia del Niño Jesus de Praga*—the association of students devoted to the Infant Jesus—was at the center, with the initials R.C. (*Romano Catolico*). While the school colors of red and white had already made its appearance, it would only be in 1940 that Fr. Sergio Martinez, athletic moderator, would adopt the Red Lion as the symbol for the Bedan fighting spirit.



By 1918, the American influence had become widespread enough to cause the dominance of the English language in teaching, as well as the change in name from "El Colegio de San Beda" to San Beda College.



The late Abbot Celestino Gusi's legacy improved the physical arrangements of the structures in the Abbey and the College. More importantly, he worked tirelessly to *Filipinize* the abbey. He discontinued the earlier practice of bringing in monks from Spain to serve in the Philippines. Fr. Anselmo Sison, one of the first Filipino Benedictines, received the responsibility of recruiting Filipinos to become monks. Among the early novices who survived the rigors of Benedictine formation were Fr. Celestine Say (who became the first Filipino Prior) and Fr. Benito Afuang, who became the first Filipino Principal in San Beda.

Such developments in the recruitment of Filipinos to the monastic life, however, had its roots in the precarious dearth of vocations, which had started two decades earlier. No novice had entered the cloister since the financially disastrous 1930s.



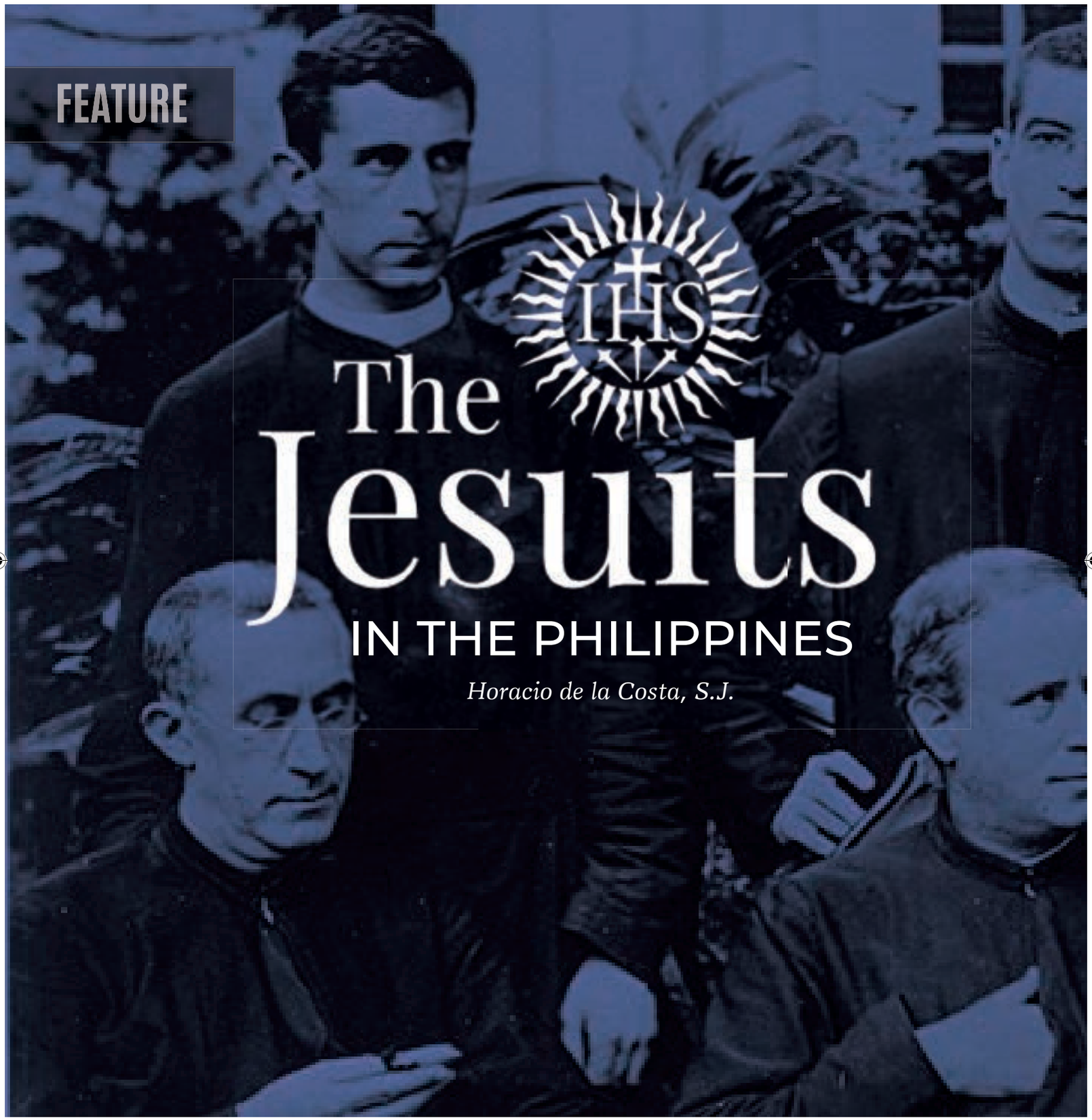
When Abbot Gusi's group arrived in 1948, there were only eight Spanish priests left in the Abbey. Fr. Silvestre Lacson, one-time Prior Administrator in the Abbey and San Beda Rector, referred to Abbot Gusi's decision to recruit Filipinos as "a watershed in Benedictine evolution." Those who passed the litmus test and withstood the vocation fallout in the years following the reforms promulgated by the Second Vatican Council guided the Abbey's and College's progress through the turbulent political unrest of the 1960s.

The 1970s saw the Community's bold decision to establish another school in Alabang, Muntinlupa, then almost an uninhabited grassland. *Benedictine Abbey School* (BAS) or San Beda Alabang opened its gates to 78 preschool boys and girls students on 10 July 1972. Fr. Roberto de Jesus, OSB, who was the first Rector, supervised the growing years of the new institution. Worth noting is that BAS pioneered the modern concept of the *non-graded open classroom instructional system*. In school year 1977-1978, BAS opened its high school department. In 1995, to commemorate the Benedictine Community's Centennial in the Philippines, the Abbey Community decided to rename BAS to St. Benedict College. On 7 September 2004, after 32 years of existence, the College made a historic decision to adopt the secondary name of the institution as its official name: San Beda College Alabang.

In the 1980s, the Abbey began the foundation of the Transfiguration Monastery in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, which eventually became an Abbey in 2017. Some other developments that the Benedictines made in the Philippine evangelization and education were the expansion of San Beda College to the Rizal Campus and the subsequent attainment of a University Status in 2019. To date, the Benedictine Community strives to instill and propagate the Catholic faith to more and more Filipino youth.

In 2020, the Benedictines celebrated their 125th year of presence and service in the Philippines.

FEATURE



The Jesuits IN THE PHILIPPINES

Horacio de la Costa, S.J.



Excerpt reprinted from Philippine Studies Vol. 7, No. 1 (1959): 68-83, by permission of the Ateneo de Manila University

The first Jesuits to come to the Philippines arrived in Manila on 17 September 1581. They were Father Antonio Sedeño, the superior of the group, Father Alonso Sánchez and Brother Nicolás Gallardo. A fourth member, the scholastic Gaspar Suárez de Toledo, younger brother of the theologian Francisco Suárez, had died during the voyage from Mexico.

They had been sent at the request of Don Guido de Lavezaris, the second governor of the Philippines, and Fray Domingo de Salazar O.P., its first bishop. Father General Mercurian's instructions were that they should familiarize themselves with conditions in the colony and report on the advisability of establishing a permanent Jesuit mission.

While carrying out these instructions, they made themselves useful in various ways. They had been given a house outside the walled city in a fishing village called Lagyo, between the present districts of Ermita and Malate; but they went daily into the city to perform their priestly ministry among the Spanish settlers, their Filipino domestics, and the Chinese and Japanese immigrants who were beginning to flock to the Philippines, attracted by the trade.

Father Sedeño is credited with having introduced the arts of stone-cutting and brick-making to the Philippines, and with having supervised the construction of the first stone buildings in Manila. Father Sánchez was entrusted with highly important tasks by both the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities. When Bishop Salazar convoked a synod in 1582, he appointed Sánchez its secretary. Later that year, Governor Ronquillo sent him on a delicate mission to Macao. Philip II of Spain had just won the disputed succession to the crown of Portugal, and it was important that the Portuguese of Macao should be persuaded as quickly as possible to give him their allegiance. Sánchez accomplished this mission successfully.

FIRST MISSION

Meanwhile, a few more Jesuits had been sent to assist Sedeño, and it now became possible to undertake mission work in the provinces. In 1591 the missions of Taytay and Antipolo, in the present province of Rizal, were founded, and in 1593 Father Pedro Chirino was sent on a temporary mission to the island of Panay. It was here, in the village of Tigbauan some miles west of the modern city of Iloilo, that Father Chirino established the first Jesuit school in the Philippines, an elementary school for Visayan children.

After finishing his business at Madrid on behalf of the Philippine colonists, Sánchez reported to Father General Acquaviva at Rome. He strongly recommended that the Society establish itself permanently in the Philippines. Father Acquaviva concurred and raised the Philippine Mission to the status of a vice-province dependent on the Province of Mexico. Word of this decision and of the appointment of Father Sedeño as vice-provincial reached Manila in 1595 with a large contingent of missionaries: eight priests and one brother.

THE COLLEGE OF MANILA

With these welcome reinforcements, Father Sedeño did two things. He informed the governor, Don Luís Perez Dasmariñas, that he was now ready to comply with the government's request that a Jesuit college be opened in Manila. Ever since 1585, not only the government but the bishop and the colonists had been urging him to take this step, but uncertainty as to the status of the Jesuit mission and lack of personnel



obliged him to refuse. He now had the men he needed, and in September 1595 Father Juan de Ribera, professor of moral theology, and Father Tomas de Montoya, professor of grammar, delivered the inaugural lectures of the new College of Manila. By this time, the Jesuits had transferred their residence to a large compound just inside the southwest gate of the walled city, then called the Royal Gate. Sedeño had built a church there, facing northeast along what is now General Luna Street, and the attached residence was enlarged to accommodate the college.



SAMAR AND LEYTE

Father Sedeño's second step was to request that the vice-province be entrusted with the evangelization of the islands of Samar and Leyte, where no permanent mission stations had as yet been established. Upon the request being granted, he ordered Father Chirino to proceed there immediately with a small band of missionaries and to select suitable sites for the first stations. They chose Carigara on the north and Dulag on the east coast of Leyte. While these stations were being opened, Father Sedeño went personally to Cebu to establish there a central mission house. He had barely completed the arrangements for it when he fell sick and died (2 September 1595), only a few days before the formal opening of the College of Manila.



Some years later, Father General Acquaviva directed Diego Garcia, a priest of wide administrative experience in Peru and Mexico, to conduct a visitation of the Philippine vice-province, organize its expanded work on a sound basis, and determine along what lines further expansion should proceed. Father Garcia arrived in the Philippines in 1599. He reported to the General that the vice-province now had five mission stations in Leyte, one in Samar and one in Bohol; and that these, together with the mission of Antipolo near Manila and the mission of Mandaue near Cebu, comprised 54,330 souls, of which 12,696 were already Christians. One of the Leyte missionaries, Father Alonso de Humanes, had opened a boarding school for boys at Dulag. This produced such excellent results that Garcia himself opened a similar school at Antipolo.

THE COLLEGE OF SAN JOSE

At the College of Manila, the need for boarding facilities for the students was felt even more keenly. In the opinion of the professors, unless the students were withdrawn from the numerous distractions of life in a colonial outpost, they could not be made to pay proper attention to their books. Garcia took immediate steps to remedy the situation. In 1601, with the full approval of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, he founded a residential college attached to the College of Manila, and this residential college was named the College of San Jose. It occupied a separate building in the Jesuit compound. Here the resident scholars lived under the supervision of Jesuit prefects, though they attended classes in the College of Manila with the day scholars.

Like the College of Manila, the College of San Jose received its endowment after it had been founded, and from the same source. Rodriguez de Figueroa, who had endowed the College of Manila, drew up a will in 1596 in which he set aside a sum of money to establish and maintain a boarding school in Manila under Jesuit auspices. This grant was,



however, conditional, for the testator wished in the first place to provide for his children, and it was only in the event that his daughter Juana should die in her minority that the endowment would actually take effect. Juana perished in a shipwreck while being taken by her tutor to Mexico, and thus part of the Figueroa estate, consisting of a cattle ranch in Panay and properties in Mexico, became an *obra pia* or trust fund administered (not owned) by the Society of Jesus for the pious purpose indicated by its donor.

PHILIPPINE NOVITIATE

Garcia had the vision to foresee that the Philippine vice-province could not be adequately supplied with men from Europe and America; it should as soon as practicable draw at least a part of its membership from the Philippines itself. Actually, Sedeño and his successor, Ramon Prat, had already received into the Society several candidates, who were being trained in the Manila residence. Garcia conceived the



plan of establishing a separate novitiate at Antipolo, but he ran into financial difficulties and the transfer was not actually effected until 1606. Two years later Captain Pedro de Britto and his wife offered their estate in San Pedro Makati, a district near Manila, for a novitiate. The offer was accepted, but the construction of a suitable building took so long that the novices were not able to occupy it until 1622.

CHIRINO'S REPORT

To go back a little in our narrative: in 1602 Garcia sent Chirino to Rome to give Father General Acquaviva a detailed account of the state of the vice-province and its works. Acquaviva was so favorably impressed by Chirino's report that he had him edit it for publication. It appeared in Rome in 1604—the first published work on the Philippines by a Jesuit, and a primary source of information on Philippine history and culture ever since. Moreover, the General decided on the basis of Chirino's information that the organization of the vice-province was sufficiently advanced for it to be made a full-fledged province independent of Mexico. True, it was not self-sufficient as far as men were concerned and would not be for a long time to come; but as regards finances it was already self-supporting. Moreover, distance and slowness of communication made it imperative that its superior should have the powers of provincial.

THE PHILIPPINE JESUIT PROVINCE

In 1605, therefore, the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus was erected with Father Gregorio Lopez as first provincial. It had a total membership of 67, distributed among 11 residences, namely, a college of secondary and higher studies (the College of Manila), a residential college annexed to it (the College of San Jose), seven mission residences, and two mission stations. Ten candidates, six for the priesthood and four for the brotherhood, were undergoing their novitiate.

THE VISAYAN MISSIONS

The principal difficulty encountered by the Jesuits in the Visayan missions was that of persuading the people, whose way of life was based on shifting agriculture, to abandon their dispersed clan villages and come together in large, permanent towns where they could be properly instructed in the Christian faith and the arts of civilization. They saw at once that mere compulsion was ineffective; for the change to be permanent, the Visayans had to be made to realize the advantages and learn the techniques of settled agriculture. While this process, necessarily slow, was going on, the missionaries experimented with several different ways of carrying on their work until they decided what they considered to be the most effective. This was to form themselves into several groups ("task forces," to borrow naval terminology), each group consisting of three or four priests and two or three brothers, based on a central residence. From this residence they would go out in teams to visit the clan villages of their area by turns, preaching, baptizing, administering the sacraments and providing

medical assistance. As soon as one team returned to the residence, another set out, and so throughout the year. Thus, until a settled parish life could be evolved in which the people went to their priest, the priest went to the people.

THE MORO WARS

One big obstacle to the formation of large settled communities in the Visayan islands in the seventeenth century was the almost yearly expeditions made by the Moros or Muslim Malays of southern Philippines for the purpose of securing slaves. The monopoly of the carrying trade of Southeast Asia established first by the Portuguese and then by the Dutch took away from seafaring communities such as those of Magindanau and the Sulu archipelago their principal means of livelihood. On the other hand, the increased demand for spices and other tropical products resulted in expanded production and a call for plantation labor. The Magindanaus and Sulus were not slow to perceive that this fact provided them with a highly profitable alternative to their former trading activities. Their geographical location placed them strategically between the slave markets of Indonesia and a vast reservoir of human quarry, the unwarlike peoples of the Visayan islands. With their swift, shallow-draft *caracoas* or cruisers and their superlative seamanship they could steal upon an unsuspecting sea-coast village, fall upon it and be off with their captives and booty before anyone had time to organize a defense. They started with small hunting packs in the last years of the sixteenth century; but as the profits of the traffic came to be realized, the raiding expeditions grew in size and scope until, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, predatory fleets of thirty, forty and more cruisers were ranging as far north as Manila Bay itself.

The early Spanish governors made several attempts to reduce the Moros to submission, but without success. Rodriguez de Figueroa, the great benefactor of the Philippine Jesuits, perished leading one such attempt. The government then resorted to purely defensive measures. A fleet of armed galleys was organized to patrol the interisland seas, but these heavy vessels, built on the Venetian model, were too slow and lay too deep in the water to be effective against the Moro cruiser. The galley commanders themselves believed that the only way to stop the raiders, short of carrying the war into their own country, was to establish a base at the tip of the Zamboanga peninsula and thus control Basilan Straits; for it was through these straits or past them that the Moros had perforce to pass during the season of the southeast monsoons in order to strike at the Visayas.

MINDANAO MISSIONS

This plan had the full support of the Visayan Jesuits, whose missions were the hardest hit by the raids. They had taken their own measures of local defense, such as building watchtowers, training and arming militia, and fortifying their mission compounds to serve as citadels for their flocks; but such measures were not always proof against surprise attacks. The government finally fell in with the plan after repeated urging by Father Pedro Gutierrez, the founder of the Jesuit mission of Dapitan in northern Mindanao. In 1635 the military and naval base of Zamboanga was set up with an initial force of 300 Spanish and 1,000 Visayan troops. Another Jesuit, Father Melchor de Vera, designed and supervised the construction of the fort.

Soon afterwards a new and vigorous governor, Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, decided to take the offensive. In 1637 he took Lamitan, the principal stronghold of the Magindanaus, by assault, and two years later conquered and occupied Jolo, the capital of the Sulu sultanate. The Moros of the district around Lake Lanao, faced with simultaneous attack from north and south, submitted. In all these expeditions, Jesuits went as chaplains to the troops and stayed to minister to the garrisons and to begin the conversion of the Moros.

It was difficult and dangerous work. They had the millennial tradition of mutual hatred between



Muslim and Christian to overcome, besides the fact that the government with which they were necessarily identified had come bringing not peace but a sword. They made sincere conversions chiefly among the laboring classes and the slaves; the warrior class, if they accepted Christianity at all, did so out of policy. Yet, even the most resolute Muslims among them could not altogether withhold their friendship from such men as Father Alejandro Lopez, whose absolute integrity and fair-dealing won their reluctant admiration.

In 1663, Governor Manrique de Lara took the hasty step of withdrawing all troops from Mindanao, including the garrison of Zamboanga, in order to concentrate them in Manila against a possible attack by the Chinese warlord Koxinga (Cheng Ch'engkung). The attack did not materialize, but neither was the Zamboanga station restored. It was a serious blow to the Jesuit missions among the Moros, for at that time the fathers had not won the confidence of the More rulers sufficiently to be able to dispense with the support of the Spanish government.

Zamboanga was not reoccupied until 1718. Once again, the Moro missions were entrusted to the Society. They made enough progress to warrant the elevation of the Zamboanga residence to the status of a "college"—not in the sense of a school, but of a central house which had dependent upon it a series of mission stations extending southwards into the Sulu archipelago and eastwards along the southern coast of Mindanao as far as Cotabato. In 1748, it even looked as though the Sultan of Sulu, Alimud Din I, might become a Christian. The authorities whisked him to Manila and had him instructed for baptism. He was baptized, however, against the advice of the Jesuits who knew him best. Their cautiousness was confirmed by the event, for the sultan soon belied his profession of Christianity. When the Spanish government put him under arrest for treason, the Sulus mounted an offensive. The Visayan settlements defended themselves heroically under the leadership of their Jesuit and Recollect pastors. In northern Mindanao, particularly, military honors were shared by the Recollect Fray Agustin de San Pedro, surnamed *El Padre Capitan*, and the Jesuit Francisco Ducos, defender of Iligan. Strange honors for messengers of the gospel of peace; but the times were desperate and demanded desperate measures.

TAGALOG MISSIONS

Yet, although raiding Moros remained an ever-present peril, the Visayan missions made considerable progress during the

seventeenth century. The massive mission churches of Bohol, Leyte and Samar, many of which still stand, though they are only now beginning to be appreciated as particularly splendid examples of Philippine colonial architecture, prove that by the latter part of the seventeenth century when they were built, the Jesuit missionaries had largely succeeded in transforming the semi-nomadic tribes they had found upon arrival into a settled Christian population. Among the Tagalogs, they added to their original mission of Taytay-Antipolo the towns of Silang, Indang and Maragondong, in the present province of Cavite, besides accepting the chaplaincy of the troops and shipyard workers in the great naval base of Cavite proper. They also took charge of the island of Marinduque, off the southern coast of Luzon, and mission stations along the east coast of Mindoro.

THE GUAM MISSION

In 1668 Father Diego Luís de Sanvítores and a small band of companions founded the mission of Guam. The Guamanians did not at first take kindly to their ministrations, killing several of them and their successors. Among the most illustrious of these martyrs was the founder of the mission himself, who gave his life for Christ in 1672. The resulting drain on the personnel of the province stopped further expansion for the time being, even within the Philippines. It was resumed early in the eighteenth century with the establishment of a chain of mission stations in the western half of Negros island, the reactivation of the Moro missions referred to above, and the discovery, exploration and evangelization of the Palaus, where two Belgian members of the province, Fathers Jacques Duberon and Joseph Cortil, were martyred in 1711 or 1712.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN MANILA

Meanwhile, the College of Manila and the affiliated College of San Jose made slow but steady progress through the seventeenth century. The former, although not a university in the strict sense, granted university degrees in philosophy and theology by virtue of the privileges conferred by the Holy See on colleges of the Society of Jesus. Its right to do so was challenged in 1648 but was confirmed by the Council of the Indies in 1652. In 1733 Philip V of Spain founded two regius professorships in the college, one of canon and another of civil law. Starting from that date, the institution is frequently referred to in contemporary documents as the University of San Ignacio. In 1750 Governor Ovando founded a chair of mathematics, a discipline which at that time embraced certain applied sciences such as navigation and military engineering.

The institution made important contributions to original research in the fields of moral theology, botany, linguistics, history and geography. In the early part of the seventeenth century Fathers Juan de Ribera and Diego de Bobadilla were often consulted by the government as well as by the clergy and private persons regarding moral problems arising from the often unprecedented conditions of European rule in an Asian country.

TRAINING OF THE CLERGY

Although the residential College of San Jose was not founded exclusively or even explicitly as a seminary for priests, it obviously lent itself to this purpose. Many of the scholarships founded in the institution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were burses for the training of secular priests. The college remained a small one by modem standards. The highest recorded enrollment is 49, in 1753. From its foundation to 1768, when the Jesuits ceased to administer it, an estimated 992 students passed through its halls. Among the alumni whom it has been possible to identify are one archbishop, eight bishops, 40 secular priests, 11 Augustinians, 11 Augustinian Recollects, three Dominicans, eight Franciscans, 46 Jesuits and 93 laymen.

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES

The church built by Sedeño was so badly damaged by successive earthquakes that it had to be replaced. Work on the new church began in 1626 under the direction of an Italian Jesuit,



Father Gianantonio Campioni. It was completed in 1632, a fine example of baroque architecture, with a cruciform ground plan, an octagonal dome, and two towers on the facade, one a bell tower and the other a clock tower. From the very beginning the college fathers sought to make it the church of the Filipinos and other non-Europeans who resided in the walled city either as domestic servants, artisans or shopkeepers. Sermons and instructions were given not only in Spanish but in Tagalog, and a Sodality for Tagalogs was organized as well as one for Negroes (which included Indians, victims of the slave trade).

Outside the walled city, the Jesuits had charge of the Chinese parish of Santa Cruz and the Japanese parish of San Miguel. Closed retreats for laymen were conducted both in the Manila college itself and in the San Pedro Makati residence, which was used as a villa and house of retreats after the removal of the novices. Closed retreats for women were conducted in the house of a religious community which came to be known as the *Beatas de la Compañia de Jesus*, but whose official title today is the Religious of the Virgin Mary. This, the first religious congregation of women to be organized in the Philippines, was founded in 1684 by a Chinese-Filipino mestiza of Binondo, the saintly Ignacia del Espiritu Santo.

Mother Ignacia's spiritual director, Father Paul Klein, helped her to write the constitutions of the congregation, which she modelled closely on the constitutions of the Society of Jesus. It was this, and the fact that the sisters lived near the college and performed their devotions in the college church, which led to their being called *beatas de la Compañia*, although there never was any juridical connection between the two communities.

EXPULSION

In 1767, Charles III of Spain, for reasons which he preferred to keep locked in the royal bosom, decreed the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from all the Spanish dominions. The decree reached the Philippines the following year. The Manila Jesuits were immediately placed under arrest, their books and papers confiscated, their houses sealed. Those in the provinces were conveyed under escort to Manila. Of the 140 members of the Philippine Province, 21 were certified by the government physician as being too ill to travel. The remainder were sent in four groups

to Spain between 1769 and 1771, and from Spain deported to the Papal States.

The Jesuit parishes and missions in Leyte and Samar were transferred to the Franciscans, those in Cebu, Panay, Negros, Bohol and northern Mindanao to the Recollects. and those in the Tagalog provinces to the secular clergy. All the buildings and properties of the Order were confiscated by the Crown. An exception was made of the endowment of the College of San Jose, which was regarded as a pious foundation administered but not owned by the Society. Its administration was transferred to the archbishop of Manila, along with the physical plant of the College of Manila which Archbishop Sancho made over into a diocesan seminary.

In 1773, Clement XIV, under pressure from the Bourbon courts of France, Spain, and Naples, suppressed the Society of Jesus throughout the world. Pius VII restored it in 1814. Spain was in the throes of revolution, with anti-clerical liberals arrayed against clerical conservatives. The restored Society had barely returned to Spain when it was expelled again in 1822. Readmitted, it was suppressed by royal decree in 1834; restored in virtue of a concordat with the Holy See in 1851; expelled a third time in 1868; and permanently legalized in 1880.

RETURN

In 1852, soon after one of its short-lived restorations, the Jesuit Province of Spain was asked by Queen Isabella II to return to the Philippines to undertake, or rather to resume the evangelization of Mindanao and Sulu. The Spanish Jesuits accepted the commission, along with the attached condition that they would not try to recover any of the property confiscated by the government from the Old Society. On 4 February 1859, six priests and four brothers under the leadership of Father Jose Fernandez Cuevas set sail from Cadiz for Manila. They landed on 14 April, being received with great charity by the Augustinians, who had them stay in their house at Guadalupe until they could set up for themselves.

A grant from the government enabled them to purchase a house at the corner of Anda and Arzobispo streets in the walled city, and this became and remained the central residence of the Philippine Mission until it was destroyed in the recapture of Manila by the American forces in 1945.

THE ESCUELA MUNICIPAL

Soon after the Jesuits' arrival, the city council of Manila put in a request that they take charge of the Escuela Municipal, a public primary school for boys. Father Cuevas at first refused on the plea that his orders were only to take charge of the Mindanao missions; but Governor Norzagaray finally persuaded him to accept by taking the responsibility of explaining the step to the home government.

On 10 December 1859, Don Lorenzo Moreno Conde, the schoolmaster then in charge of the Escuela Municipal, formally handed it over to the new Jesuit faculty, consisting of Father José Ignacio Guerrico, prefect of studies, Fathers Pascual Barrado and Ramón Barúa, teachers, and Brother Venancio Belzunce, prefect of discipline. They found that there were 33 boys registered but only 23 in actual attendance. Nine days later they moved the school to a building across Anda Street from the mission house; by that time the enrollment had risen to 76. On 2 January 1860 it stood at 120 and the following March at 170. The school closed at the end of June and reopened in August with an enrollment of 210.

It should be noted that the Escuela Municipal was a public school primarily for Spanish boys, since the city council which supported it represented at that time the Spanish residents of Manila. However, the Jesuits from the very beginning of their administration opened the school to Filipinos and boys of other nationalities,

so that by the end of the nineteenth century, nine-tenths of the student body were Filipinos or *mestizos*.

THE ATENEO MUNICIPAL DE MANILA

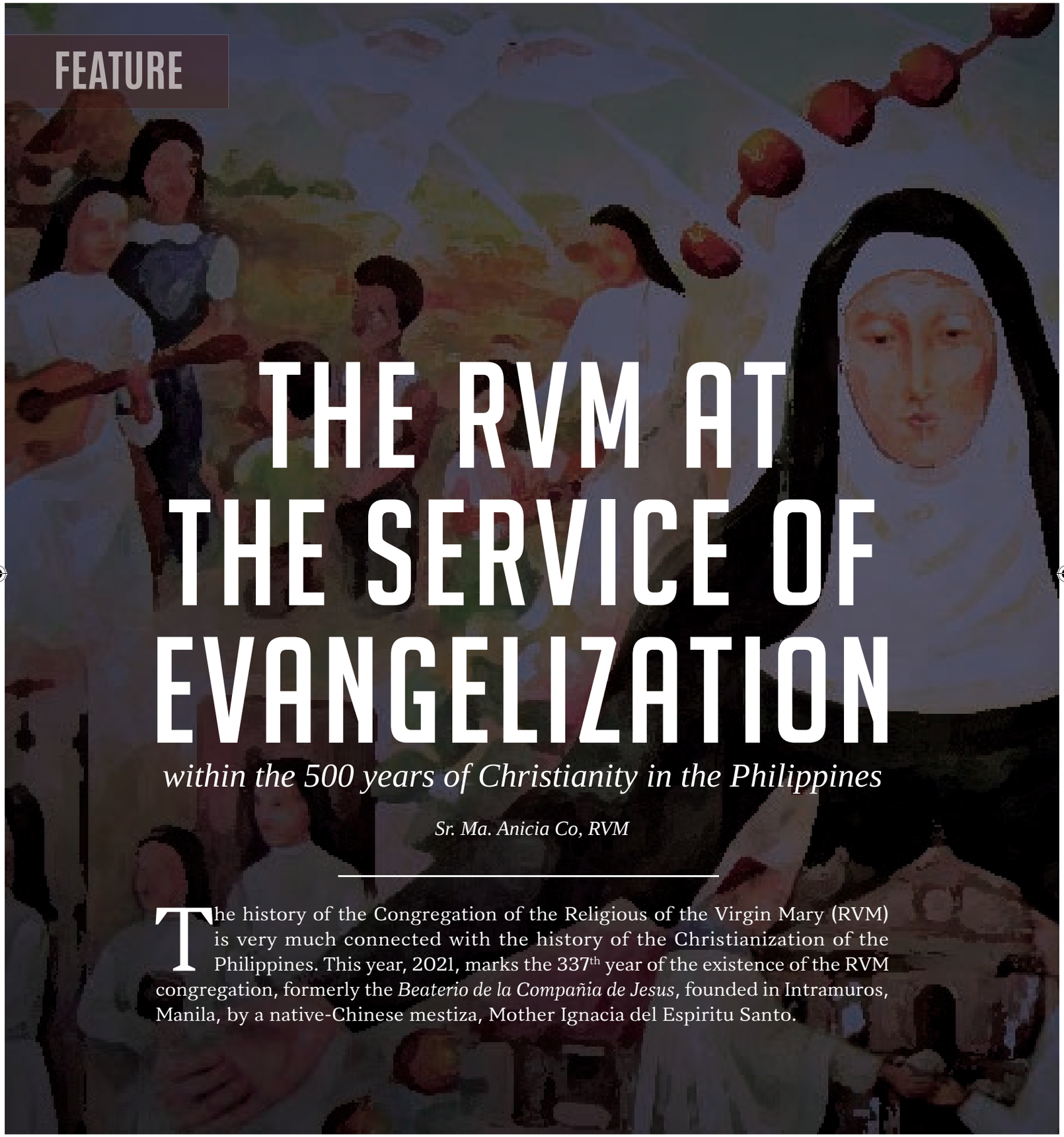
In 1862, the city council of Manila, pleased with the way the school was being conducted, invited Father Cuevas to submit a plan for its expansion to a school of secondary instruction. Two years later he did so. The plan, modelled on that already in operation in Cuba, called for a modification of the last two grades of the existing five-grade curriculum and the addition of three more years. Latin and Greek grammar would be added to the subjects of the *superior* and *supremo* grades, while the additional years would be devoted to the standard "college-level" subjects of the Jesuit system, namely, poetry, rhetoric and philosophy. Thus, the original five grades would be preserved as a terminal course for those who did not intend to make any further studies, while boys preparing for university studies would be ready for them upon the completion of the entire eight-year curriculum. The plan met with the government's approval and went into effect in 1865. To fit its new status, the name of the school was changed to Ateneo Municipal de Manila.

That same year, the acquisition of additional property in the same block enabled the Ateneo to offer boarding facilities. In 1870, the first ten students to complete the secondary curriculum received the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Two years later, a new boy entered who was later to make history: Jose Rizal.





FEATURE

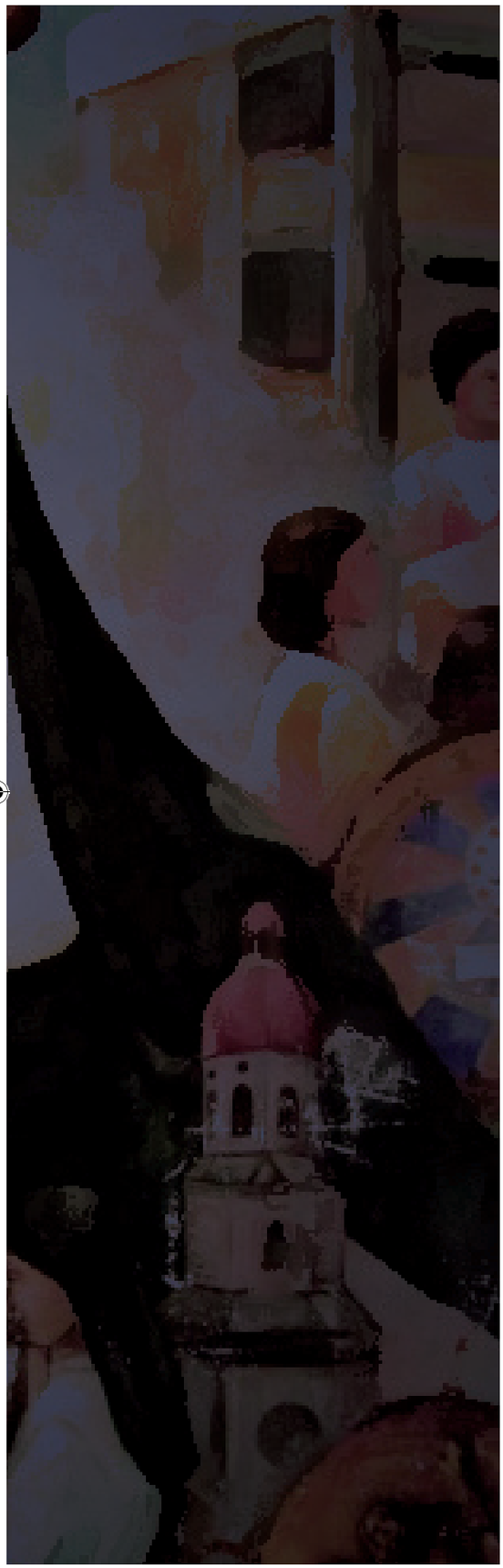


THE RVM AT THE SERVICE OF EVANGELIZATION

within the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines

Sr. Ma. Anicia Co, RVM

The history of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) is very much connected with the history of the Christianization of the Philippines. This year, 2021, marks the 337th year of the existence of the RVM congregation, formerly the *Beaterio de la Compañia de Jesus*, founded in Intramuros, Manila, by a native-Chinese mestiza, Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo.



MOTHER IGNACIA DEL ESPIRITU SANTO (1663-1748) AND THE *BEATERIO DE LA COMPAÑÍA DE JESÚS*

The foundress of the Religious of the Virgin Mary, Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, was born, lived, and died during the Spanish colonial era in the Philippines. The few primary sources and historical documents available yield enough information to reconstruct the story of Mother Ignacia and the community she founded, the *Beaterio de la Compañía de Jesús* (hereinafter, the Beaterio), now known as the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary.

The precise date of her birth is not known, but her baptismal record shows the date and place of her baptism, the name of her parents and godparent, and the priest who baptized her. Her parents were Jusepe Iuco, a Chinese convert to Catholicism in 1652, and Maria Jeronima, a native. They were residents of Binondo, the place where the Chinese Catholics were settled by the Spaniards to separate them from the non-Catholic Chinese. Because of the threat of the invasion by the Chinese pirates in 1662, the church in Binondo was demolished, together with the other stone structures, convents and churches in Manila upon the order of the Spanish Governor General so that they could not be used as bastion of defense or offense by the Chinese pirates in case of attack. Thus, Jusepe and Maria Jeronima brought their first child to the Holy Kings Church in Parian where she received the sacrament of baptism from Fray Alberto Collares, OP. At her baptism, she was given the name Ignacia del Espiritu Santo. The significance of this name would become manifest in the course of her life.

The historical context in which Ignacia grew up was characterized by conflicts and discrimination. Every now and then, there were conflicts between the governor-general and the archbishop, and some conflicts among the religious orders. The society which Ignacia knew was a colonial pyramid. At the top of the society were the Spaniards who came to the country from Spain (the *peninsulares*). They considered themselves to be the legitimate inhabitants of the islands and held top government positions. Next in rank were the Spaniards born in the islands (*insulares* or creoles). They belonged to the ruling class but were also discriminated against by the *peninsulares*. Below these ranks were the half-breeds (*mestizos/mestizas*) and the natives (*yndios/yndias*). As a Chinese-*yndia mestiza*, Ignacia became aware of the ambivalent attitude of the Spaniards toward the Chinese. They praised the Chinese for their industry and contribution to the economy but treated them with suspicion and taxed them heavily. The natives, on the other hand, were engaged to work for the Spaniards and their interests. Some were subjected to forced labor in the shipyard of Cavite and other places as well. Others were recruited as sailors and trained to fight with the Spaniards against any invading force. The roles of men and women in the society were delineated. For women and girls, social acceptability meant developing characteristics of shyness, discretion, restraint, and timidity.

Ignacia grew up as an only child from age six because her siblings, Rafaela, Santiago, and Juana dela Concepcion all died in infancy. She learned her first prayers from her mother who also taught her the basic tenets of the Catholic faith and the practice of Christian piety. Her faith was nurtured in the family. With her parents, Ignacia followed the practices of piety common during her time: praying the rosary and other devotions, particularly devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary, joining processions, assisting at Mass, receiving Holy Communion and going to confession.



Like the other native and mestizo/mestiza children, Ignacia received education in the parish which was mostly doctrinal. Although there were already two educational institutions for women and girls, Sta. Potenciana established in 1595 and Sta. Isabel in 1632, these were reserved for Spanish girls and women.

In 1684, when Ignacia was 21 years old, her parents wanted her to marry. She felt there could be another way of life for her. She desired to dedicate her whole life to God. Torn between the desire to please her parents and to follow the stirrings deep within her heart, she went to make a general confession and seek the advice of Fr. Paul Klein, a Jesuit priest from Bohemia who arrived in Manila in 1682 and became known by his hispanized name Pablo Clain (1650-1717). Fr. Clain gave her the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola to help her discern the will of God for her. After this retreat, she went home to tell her parents about her decision "to remain in the service of the Divine Majesty and live by the sweat of her brow."

She left home, supported herself by needlework, and lived a life of prayer and penance in the house located at the back of the Jesuit College of Manila. Mother Ignacia centered her life on the suffering Christ and tried to imitate him through a life of service and humility. She prayed earnestly to God and performed penances to move God to have mercy on people. Her spirituality of humble service was expressed in her capacity to forgive, to bear wrongs patiently, and to correct with gentleness and meekness. This spirituality was manifest in peace and harmony in the community, mutual love and union of wills, witnessing to the love of Christ and the maternal care of the Blessed Mother.

Her life of prayer and labor attracted other native women who also felt called to the religious life but could not be admitted into the existing congregation at that time which admitted only Spanish women. Mother Ignacia accepted these women into her company, and the first community was born. They became known as the *Beatas de la Compañía de Jesús*, because they frequently received the sacraments at the Church of St. Ignatius, performed many acts of devotion there, and had the Jesuit Fathers for their spiritual directors and confessors.

As they grew in number, they felt the need for a more stable lifestyle and a set of rules. They set down in writing their community practices and drew up their daily schedule. Mother Ignacia and her companions were involved in retreat work and helped the Jesuit Fathers by preparing the retreatants to be disposed to the Spiritual Exercises. They also admitted young girls as boarders and taught them Christian doctrine, reading and writing, as well as sewing and household arts and skills. Mother Ignacia did not make any distinction of color or race but admitted *yndias*, *mestizas* and Spanish girls to be educated in the Beaterio. She also opened the Beaterio to women, even Spanish women, who wanted a place of solitude and stay as *recogidas*. The *beatas* became known for their devotion, humility, application to work, and the spiritual exercises.

Encouraged and assisted by the Jesuit Fathers, Mother Ignacia finally completed the writing of the rules of the Beaterio which defined their group as a community of religious women. Their rule of life was based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola and inspired by the spirit and example of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mother Ignacia submitted these Rules to the archdiocesan office. With the Archdiocese being *sede vacante*, the fiscal provisor approved the Rules in 1732. Sometime after, probably in 1737, Mother Ignacia requested to be relieved of her position as Rectora and the leadership passed on to Sor Dominga del Rosario.



The community observed the process of electing the Rectora as provided for in the 1726 Constitutions and Rules. The Beaterio of Mother Ignacia will go down in history as the first group of Filipinos to exercise the right of suffrage through secret ballot.

Mother Ignacia lived the rest of her life in the Beaterio as an ordinary member without seeking honor or privilege as the foundress of the community. Jesuit Fr. Murillo Velarde saw in this act of relinquishing her position of Superior of the house a sign of her great humility. Mother Ignacia did not cling to power and privilege. All she wanted was to love God in humble service. Murillo Velarde described her as "so humble... a truly strong woman.... mortified, patient, devout, spiritual, zealous for the good of souls."

Two months before Mother Ignacia's death, the Archbishop initiated a process of securing the royal protection for the Beaterio. The Archbishop wrote his letter to the King based on the report of the visitation of the Beaterio. The letter reached Spain only two years after.

On September 10, 1748, Mother Ignacia died without knowing the response of the Spanish king to the petition of the Archbishop. But she left behind a community that was in expectant hope for what the future might hold for them, trusting always in God's providence as Mother Ignacia taught them by example. Murillo Velarde observed the honor and acknowledgment given to Mother Ignacia by the the civil and church leaders who carried her coffin during her funeral.

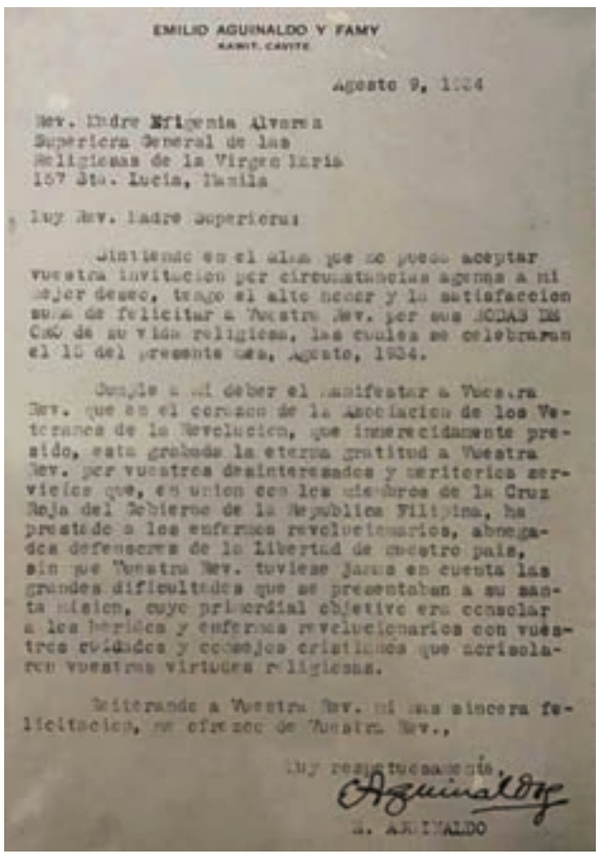
THE *BEATERIO DE LA COMPAÑÍA DE JESÚS*: SURVIVAL, CHALLENGES, AND DEVELOPMENTS (1748-1898)

Seven years after the death of Mother Ignacia, the Beaterio learned from the Archbishop the response of the King of Spain to his letter. King Ferdinand VI's decree of royal protection dated November 25, 1755 officially acknowledged the Beaterio but explicitly defined it as a secular association. The King ordained that the house "or Beaterio of native women continue to enjoy its present status supporting itself... without, however, becoming a convent or a foundation, but only a house of retreat exempt from cloister... said women and other persons living with them in the house are not to be molested in the practice of their pious exercises." The decree ensured the safety of the residents of the Beaterio, but it denied the nature of the Beaterio as a community of religious women. A year later, the King required a report on the statutes of the Beaterio. The royal *cedula* of 1761 ordered the Beaterio to be placed under the direct supervision of the governor-general, and to formulate a new constitution that would define it as a secular institution. The Jesuit Provincial, who was asked to assist the beatas in formulating the new constitutions, clarified that the Jesuits did not exercise any authority over these beatas who "are seculars" and "their voluntary pronouncement of the simple vows as approved by their confessors does not violate the law." What the beatas did was simply to mark with asterisks the numbers in the 1726 Constitutions and Rules that the King ordered to be deleted. Even without being recognized as religious women, the beatas continued to live the religious life according to the spirit and charism of Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo.

When the Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines, the beatas lost their spiritual Fathers, directors and confessors. The 1767 decree of King Charles II of Spain ordering the expulsion of the Jesuits from all his dominions including the Philippines was immediately executed when it reached the Philippines in 1768. Thus, from 1768 until the return of the Jesuits to the Philippines in 1859, the Beaterio thrived on its own and continued the retreat work even without the Jesuit priests. The beatas were not totally without any support because they enjoyed the solicitude of the Archbishop and other churchmen who helped and supported them even in their retreat works. The beatas carried on the education and formation of young girls in the Beaterio and offered hospitality to women who wanted a temporary place of seclusion and solitude.

Even with these apostolic works, the Beaterio had to deal with the demand of the King to keep them from developing as a religious community. In order to satisfy the king, the beatas produced in 1795 a copy of their constitutions with a note "*expurgado segun el edicto de 1747*" on its cover. The 1795 Constitutions, however, was exactly the same as the 1726 Constitutions and Rules of Mother Ignacia. The numbers that indicated the religious character of the Beaterio were not deleted but only marked with asterisks.





EMILIO AGUINALDO Y FAMY
KAWIT, CAVITE

Agosto 9, 1934

Rev. Madre Eligenia Alvarez
Superiora General de las
Religiosas de la Virgen Maria
157 Sto. Lucia, Manila

Muy Rev. Madre Superiora:

Sintiendo en el alma que no pueda aceptar vuestra invitacion por circunstancias agenas a mi mejor deseo, tengo el alto honor y la satisfaccion suma de felicitar a Vuestra Rev. por sus BODAS DE Oro de su vida religiosa, las cuales se celebraran el 15 del presente mes, Agosto, 1934.

Cumple a mi deber el manifestar a Vuestra Rev. que en el corazon de la Asociacion de los Veteranos de la Revolucion, que inmerecidamente presido, esta grabada la eterna gratitud a Vuestra Rev. por vuestros desinteresados y meritorios servicios que, en union con los miembros de la Cruz Roja del Gobierno de la Republica Filipina, ha prestado a los enfermos revolucionarios, abnegados defensores de la libertad de nuestro pais, sin que Vuestra Rev. tuviese jamas en cuenta las grandes dificultades que se presentaban a su santa mision, cuyo primordial objetivo era consolar a los heridos y enfermos revolucionarios con vuestros consejos cristianos que acrisolaron vuestras virtudes religiosas.

Reiterando a Vuestra Rev. mi mas sincera felicitacion, me ofrezco de Vuestra Rev.,

Muy respetuosamente,
Aguinaldo
E. AGUINALDO

The succeeding Rectoras of the Beaterio were keen in insuring that the Beaterio retain its original nature according to the spirit and vision of Mother Ignacia. The continuing support of the Archbishop who did not fail to send a delegate to preside over the election of the Rectoras of the Beaterio and to make the necessary appointments of officials when the need arose was a tacit approval and recognition of the nature and importance of this Beaterio.

The Beaterio which reached its 166 years of existence since its foundation was recognized as a teaching institution in 1850's *Buzeta's Diccionario Geografico, Estadistico, Historico de las Islas Filipinas* and in the weekly publication, *La Ilustracion Filipina*, in 1860. Its September issues featured the Beaterio of Mother Ignacia among the *Beaterios de Manila* under the title "*Educandas del Beaterio*." The beatas managed to keep the retreat movement going by inviting available priests to give the retreat and helping in explaining the points and translating them for the native women.

In 1874, about 15 years after the return of the Jesuits to the Philippines, the Jesuits, who were given the Mindanao missions and had already ransomed slave children in Tamontaca, appealed to the Beaterio for help to take care of the girls. Three *recogidas* volunteered to go to the missions. They begged the Rectora to be invested with the holy habit and the grace to be missionaries in Mindanao. These three became the first missionaries of the Beaterio of Mother Ignacia. They were given charge of the girls in Tamontaca, Cotabato, while the Jesuits took care of the boys. The beatas taught reading and writing as well as household arts of sewing, washing, and ironing clothes, even farming. The spiritual and religious formation of the beatas was taken care of by the Jesuits.

The missionary life of the beatas in Tamontaca inspired some beatas in Manila to volunteer for the Mindanao missions. Soon beaterios were opened

in places where the Jesuits had their missions, in Dapitan, Dipolog, Zamboanga, and Butuan (1880-96). The beatas distinguished themselves in educating young girls and pioneered the retreat movement in these areas.

The rise of the mission beaterios in Mindanao posed a problem to the Beaterio in Manila. When an article was published in *La Ilustracion Filipina* in 1893 that featured Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo and the work of the beatas in Manila and in Mindanao, the status of the Beaterio in Manila was questioned. Since it was not canonically a religious institute, it could not have daughter foundations. The matter was resolved by requiring the beatas going to the Mindanao mission to renounce their membership to the Beaterio in Manila. The beaterios in Tamontaca and Dapitan were to be independent beaterios and were allowed to admit novices and train them for religious profession of vows. Even with these conditions, some beatas from Manila still volunteered to go to Mindanao. They renounced their membership to the Manila Beaterio and the right to return to it.

At the outbreak of the Philippine revolution against Spain in 1896, the beatas in Manila saw the danger of their staying in the Beaterio. The former Jesuit establishment across the street had become



a Spanish barracks since the Jesuit expulsion. Only in 1898, when the American forces arrived, did the beatas evacuate the Beaterio upon the order of the Archbishop. The beatas moved to Malabon, then to Paombong and Hagonoy. Wherever they went, they gathered the little children and taught them.

Some of the beatas went along with General Emilio Aguinaldo's army and ministered to the wounded soldiers. They not only acted as nurses but also gave good counsel and encouragement to the soldiers. For these services, General Aguinaldo expressed his immense gratitude to the Beaterio when the war was over.

The mission beaterios of Mother Ignacia were the way to the fulfilment of the dreams of native women long before Ignacia was born. Clara and Isabel Caliman of Butuan and Maria Uray of Dapitan wished to belong to a religious community of women, but they did not have that opportunity. They lived and died as solitary beatas.

The troubled times did not prevent the beatas from carrying out their mission of sharing their faith not only by teaching children and helping in retreats but also by nursing the sick and wounded and giving consolation to people who were in sorrow and affliction. The beatas also became part of the shaping of the Filipino identity.

FROM BEATERIO TO CONGREGATION (1899-1948)

When the lives of the Jesuit missionaries and the beatas were endangered because of the coming of the revolutionaries from Manila, the Jesuits decided to evacuate the beatas and the children from Tamontaca. The children were distributed to some families, and the beatas of Tamontaca, Zamboanga, and Dapitan, together with the Jesuit missionaries, sailed to Manila in 1899. Upon the request of the Jesuit Superior of the Mindanao mission, the Archbishop allowed the Mindanao beatas to occupy the Beaterio which was turned into a hospital by the Spaniards and was now taken over by the American army. In 1900, when the Manila beatas who evacuated the Beaterio returned, they were surprised to see the Mindanao beatas there.



The end of the Spanish colonial rule and its *Patronato Real* meant the freedom of the Beaterio of Mother Ignacia to live its true identity as a religious community willed by God to be at the service of the mission of the Church. The beatas petitioned the Archbishop for the reorganization of the Beaterio and the return of the Jesuit spiritual direction. Approving both requests, the Archbishop recommended the revision of the constitutions to include provisions that would respond to the situation. With the permission to profess the vow of poverty, the dream of Mother Ignacia for the Beaterio to be recognized as a religious community was fulfilled.

The first general congregation held in 1902 elected the first Superior General Mother Maria Efigenia Alvarez and the members of her council. The revised constitutions were submitted to the Archbishop with a request for assistance to have the Beaterio recognized as a congregation by the Holy See. The congregation was canonically erected on July 31, 1906, and received the decree of praise from Pope Pius X on March 17, 1907. This was the first recognition by the Holy See of the religious community founded by Mother Ignacia. The Sisters complied with the required reviews and revisions of the constitutions, and on March 24, 1931, the Congregation received the decree of approbation from Pope Pius XI. From *Beaterio de la Compañia de Jesus*, the name was changed to *Compañia de las Beatas de la Virgen Maria* and to *Congregacion de Religiosas de la Virgen Maria* in 1932.

As the Congregation was undergoing the process of becoming a pontifical institute, it continued to expand its apostolic endeavors. The missions in Mindanao were incorporated into the Congregation's mission after the reorganization. Sisters were sent to the missions established before the Philippine Revolution, and new mission houses and schools were opened not only in different parts of Mindanao but also in Manila, Bulacan, Pampanga, Cavite, and Laguna. As the missions of the Congregation expanded, the school of the Beaterio in Manila which became known as the *Colegio del Beaterio* was formally incorporated in 1912. The *Colegio* upgraded its facilities and curriculum. The name was changed to St. Mary's College in 1939. The elementary and secondary courses of the Beaterio were formally recognized. The Junior Normal College was opened to prepare the Sisters for the teaching apostolate.


UNA RELIGIOSA QUE SIRVE A LA PATRIA EN LA GUERRA Y EN LA PAZ

VALOR Y ABNEGACIO

With the opening of new houses and schools from 1920 to 1930, the Congregation established itself and became known as a teaching congregation. It still continued its dormitory ministry and by 1930 it had three dormitories, one in Cebu and two in Manila. The Sisters continued the Congregation's retreat apostolate and catechetical ministry.

The Second World War (1941-1945) posed another challenge to the Congregation. Classes were suspended, schools were closed in Manila and different parts of the country. The Sisters had to evacuate Intramuros. This time there would be no more possibility of returning. The buildings were razed to the ground during the liberation of Manila in 1945. The lot in Quezon City which was acquired for the Novitiate in 1939 became the new Mother House of the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary.

The Sisters reopened the schools and accepted new missions from 1946 to 1948. Even with the needed repairs of school buildings and upgrade of facilities as well as financial constraints, the Sisters managed to continue their apostolic works.

On January 12, 1948, with the definitive approbation of its constitutions, the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) received the distinction of being an apostolic institute of pontifical right. Two hundred years after the death of Mother Ignacia, the Beaterio she founded was officially recognized by the Church as a community of religious women.



FROM AN ALL-FILIPINO CONGREGATION TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATION (1948-2020)

By the grace of God, the Sisters were able to pursue their mission of evangelization despite the many challenges of the postwar era. As the Congregation accepted new invitations to run schools in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, it also continued its retreat and dormitory apostolates and allowed Sisters to work in hospitals to care for the sick.

The Congregation kept abreast with the changing times and implemented the renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council. This meant another review and revision of the Constitutions based on the original spirit of the foundation of Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church, and the needs of the times. The Sisters took to heart the spirit of renewal of Vatican II.

Besides retreat, education, and dormitory, the Congregation organized and accepted new types of ministries. The Social Action Ministry was organized in 1972. Later on, the different social action programs were integrated in the school's community involvement programs even as the social ministry continued to have its own thrust. The Congregation sent Sisters to respond to the needs of the Church through various forms of services, in the seminary apostolate, diocesan catechetical centers, bishops' residence, in EAPI, CBCP, PMAS, diocesan finance offices, Cebu Caritas, Archdiocesan Archives, nunciatures, teaching in schools of theology, and administrative work in diocesan schools. These were grouped together as the Special Ministry of the Congregation.

The Congregation also responded to the call for overseas mission. The first RVM missions outside the Philippines were opened in Sacramento, California (1959), Honolulu, Hawaii (1971), and Indonesia (1977). Several mission houses were started in Papua New Guinea (1980), Rome (1980), and Ghana, West Africa (1982). Other foundations included Islamabad, Pakistan (1992), Canada (1994), Pago Pago, American Samoa (1995), and Taiwan (1996). From 2009 to 2020 new communities were established in Rome and in Canada.

Today, the RVMs serve God in different fields of apostolate (schools, dormitories, retreats, seminaries, social ministry, formation and special ministry) in several parts of the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Ghana, West Africa, Rome, Canada, and the United States. Education is their main apostolate. The RVMs manage 50 schools and 2 affiliate schools in the Philippines, 8 schools and 10 affiliate schools in the overseas missions. They also serve through the dormitory and retreat apostolate and are strengthening their social and pastoral ministries. Through the Special Ministry, the Congregation serves in various capacities according to the needs of the Church.

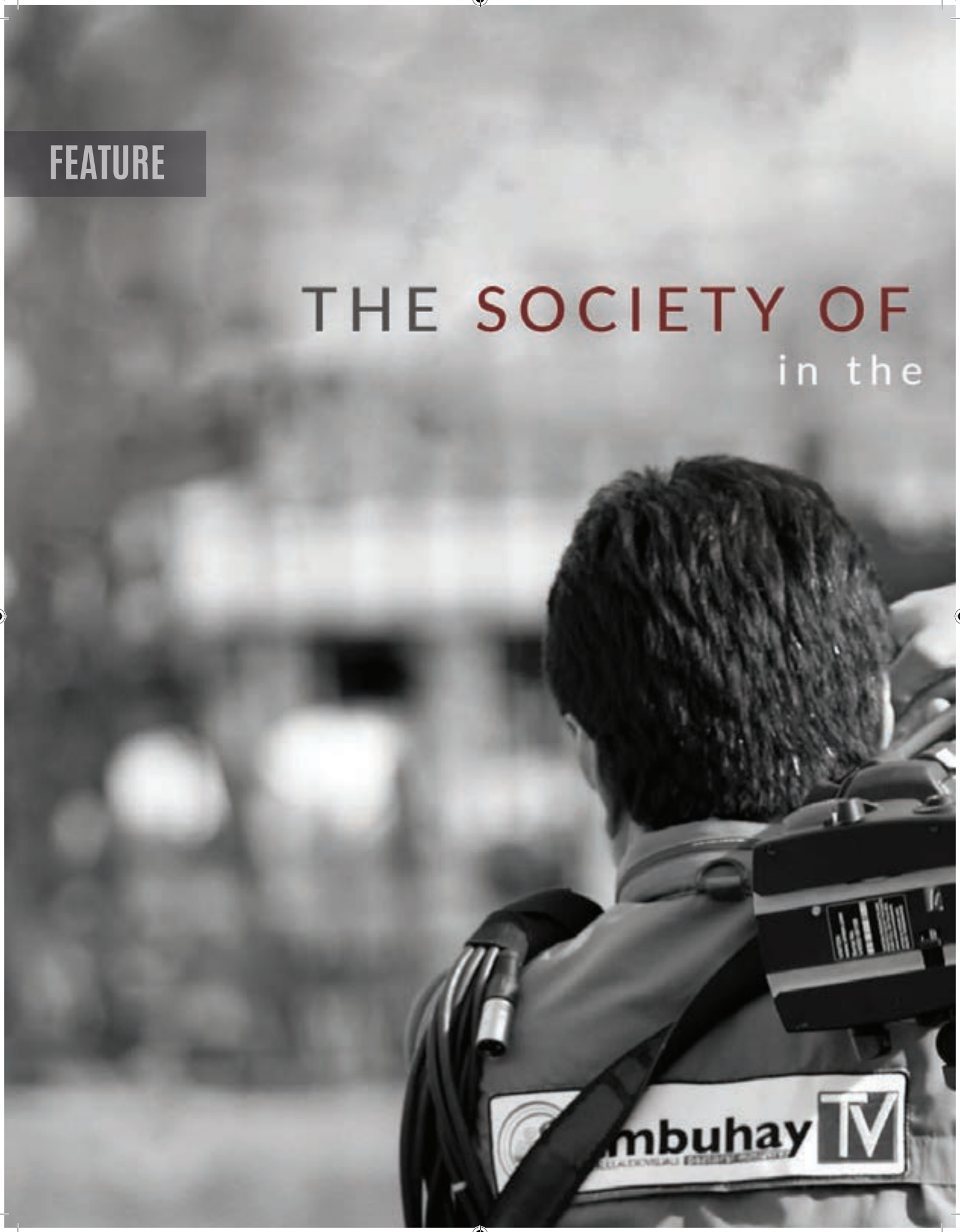
The growth of the Beaterio into a Congregation and its response to the apostolic challenges of the times show the vitality of the spirit of Mother Ignacia. Indeed, her lamp continues to shine as her daughters courageously strive to respond with zeal to the call of mission in different contexts.

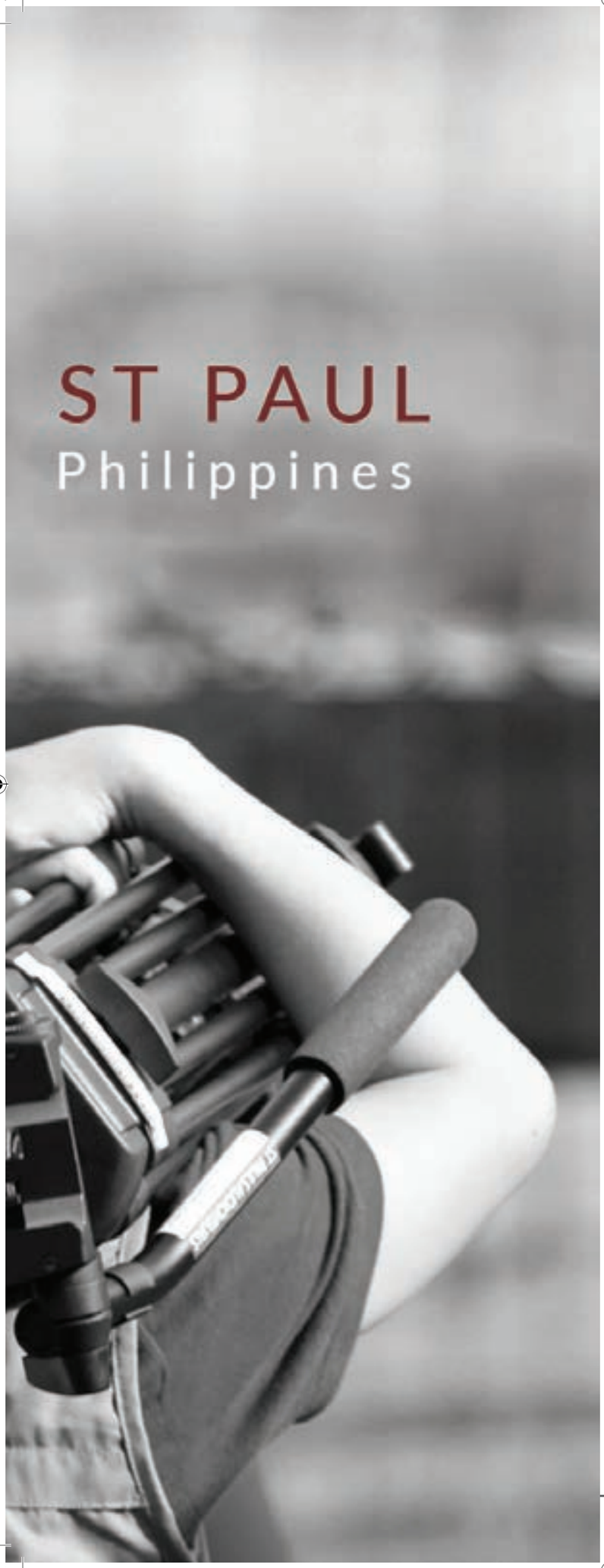
The story of the Congregation that has grown from the small Beaterio of Mother Ignacia continues to unfold. It bears witness to the enduring vitality and strength of the foundation, the spirituality of Mother Ignacia. The lamp she lit to guide the path of native women aspiring to religious life and the maturity of faith continues to shine. It remains undimmed.



FEATURE

THE SOCIETY OF
in the





The Society of Saint Paul (SSP) is a religious Congregation founded in 1914 by Blessed James Alberione in Alba, Italy. The Society of St. Paul is the first branch of the Pauline Family which consists of five religious congregations (Society of St. Paul, Daughters of St. Paul, Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd, Sisters of Mary Queen of Apostles), four consecrated secular institutes (Institute of Our Lady of the Annunciation, Institute of St. Gabriel the Archangel, Institute of the Holy Family, and Institute of Jesus the Priest), and the Association of Pauline Cooperators. The Society of St. Paul is altrice or "nourisher" of the Pauline Family and acts as the "elder" brother of the feminine congregations, offering especially its priestly ministry.

On the night that divided the 19th century from the 20th, James Alberione, a young seminarian, received a particular light to do something for the people of the new century. He felt obliged to serve the Church and to work with others in an organized way. That inspiration was vital for the specific mission and spirit of the Pauline Family. At first, he thought of a Catholic organization of writers, technicians, and propagandists to whom he would give direction, work, and spirit. But towards 1910, in a greater light, he became convinced that these writers, technicians, and propagandists should be men and women religious to give the mission more cohesion, stability, continuity, and a greater supernatural sense in the apostolate. This inspiration from the Lord became a concrete realization on August 20,1914, when, amid the destruction and calamity of the First World War, Fr. Alberione officially started the congregation. It received from Monsignor Giuseppe Re, the Bishop of Alba, the diocesan approval on December 3, 1927. The Holy See officially approved the Congregation on June 27, 1949.

The Society of St. Paul was born with the specific charism to spread Christian message and values through the means of communication. Fr. Alberione began the Typography School of Little Workers (later, Society of St. Paul) with a few boys (the first vocations to the Society of St. Paul) and a small printing machine. The apostolate that was known at the beginning as apostolate of the press grew to become publishing apostolate. As time went by, it became apostolate of the editions that includes audio-video products and the use of the latest and fastest means of communication. Printing press, radio, TV station, and cinema production houses became part of the apostolate of the Society of St Paul.

The Society of St. Paul has a specific spirituality based on Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life (cf. Jn 14:6). Fr. Alberione presents this spirituality as an integral method that helps the holistic growth of every Pauline and everyone who lives by this devotion. In the Society of St. Paul, Mary is venerated under the title Queen of Apostles. The spirit of the Congregation and of every member comes from St. Paul. Fr. Alberione considers St. Paul as Patron, Protector, Model, Teacher, Father, and Founder of the Congregation.

ARRIVAL IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Congregation that had a humble beginning in Alba started to spread in Italy and to other parts of the world. On July 7, 1935, Frs. Marco Grossi, Bernardo Borgogno, and Clemente Canavero arrived in the Philippines. However, Fr. Canavero, after a brief stay in the Philippines, left for Nanking, China.

The Apostolic Delegate in Manila, Msgr. William Piani, who had requested Fr. Alberione for the SSP's presence in the Philippines, invited the Pauline Fathers to stay temporarily at the Apostolic Nuncio's place along Taft Avenue, Manila. As they found it hard to open a house in Manila, they traveled southward to Lipa in Batangas where they were warmly





welcomed by Msgr. Alfredo Verzosa, Bishop of Lipa, who even loaned them a house that would become their residence, and in a part of the house a small printing press was set up. The pioneers started purchasing secondhand printing machines. Their presence was augmented with the arrival of Frs. Isidoro Selvo, Jerome Casolari, and Bro. Gregory. It was during this period that local vocations started to arrive.

IN MANILA AT THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

Through the help of the Apostolic Delegate, the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Michael O'Doherty, granted the permission for the SSP Fathers to transfer to Manila, on condition that they take care of a parish. A lot was purchased along F.B. Harrison Street in Pasay, and a temporary chapel was constructed. On August 10, 1941, the SSP in Lipa moved to Pasay.

The Paulines had not yet firmly settled in Pasay when World War II broke out. All the Italian Fathers and Brothers were arrested by the Japanese, transported to Batangas, and thrown into jail. The aspirants who had joined earlier were sent back to their families except for Marcelino Punto. Later, the Paulines were set free and transported back to Pasay where they were forced to share their house with the Japanese soldiers who transformed it into barracks and repair depot for their war machines. The Paulines suffered hunger, hardships, and threats to their lives while taking care of the parishioners and providing for their own sustenance. The worst disaster and loss came when the American liberators bombarded Manila and nearby areas. The Japanese, while retreating, destroyed and razed to the ground the church, the printing press, and the house. A kindhearted American Army commander told the Paulines to evacuate to Batangas, and they stayed there for three weeks, after which they returned to Pasay.

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The Paulines started the work of reconstruction, including the church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. The rebuilding was completed in 1951.

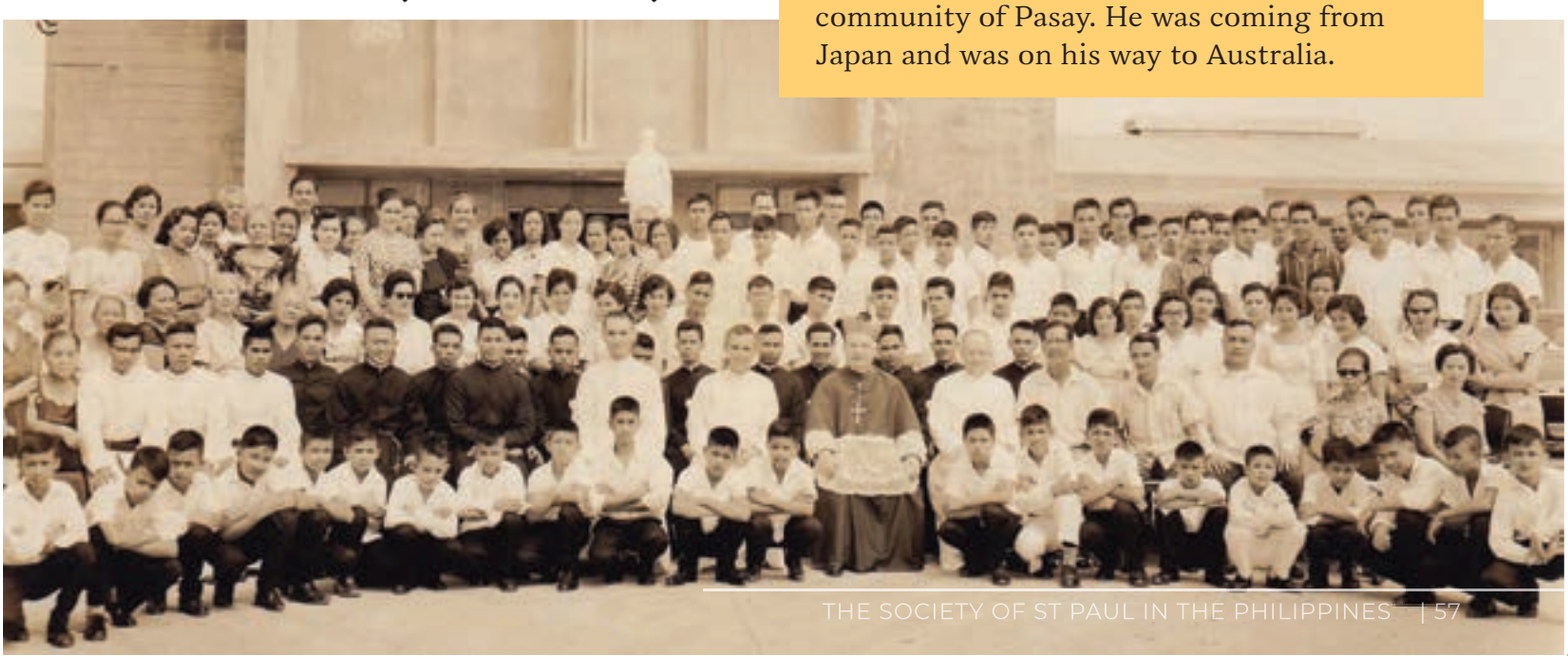
On December 16, 1951, the first Filipino priests — Frs. Moises Pascual Leviste and Francisco Joseph Villena — were ordained by the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Gabriel Reyes. A year before their ordination to the priesthood, the pioneering Brother, Marcelino John Punto, made his perpetual Religious Profession.

The *Libreria San Pablo* bookstore was built near the newly reconstructed church, and this bookstore served as outlet for the printing apostolate.

RENEWED MISSIONARY IMPETUS

When the Society of St. Paul celebrated its 40th foundation anniversary worldwide in 1954, the local community of Pasay was composed of nine priests, four religious brothers, ten novices, 20 aspirants to the brotherhood, and 60 students to the priesthood. In September of that year, the Archbishop of Manila, Msgr. Rufino J. Santos, opened the *Voice of St. Paul* over DZBB. The program was aired every Sunday at 2:00 PM by the SSP members.

On May 21, 1955, Fr. Alberione came to the Philippines and paid a short visit to the community of Pasay. He was coming from Japan and was on his way to Australia.



Another apostolic activity that came to life at this time was *St. Paul Films* for the diffusion of 16-mm films promoting Christian values.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MAKATI AND ARRIVAL OF MORE PAULINES

The house in Pasay had grown small with the ever-increasing number of those in formation. For the need of the growing community and the expansion of the apostolate, a lot in Makati was acquired from the Ayala Corporation in 1955. On this 4-hectare property, the *Queen of Apostles Seminary* was built which became the residence of the aspirants, the novices, and professed members. A part of the ground floor was converted into a printing press. The Seminary was inaugurated and blessed by Rufino Cardinal Santos on August 20, 1960. The Makati community now became the hub of the SSP. Some members remained in Pasay City to continue with the administration and ministerial services of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish (OLSP).

Meanwhile, the clerics aspiring for the priesthood were sent to the *Pauline International College* in Rome, joining SSP clerics from other countries. On their return, they would strengthen the community. Frs. Ledio Peter Barisoro and Romeo Henry Hitosis were ordained in Rome on July 7, 1963; Frs. Josefino Javellana and Arthur Palisada on June 30, 1968. Then there was the group of the "four evangelists": Frs. Andres Mark Arboleda, Fruto Matthew Rosales, Felino Luke Quitalig, and Ramon John Manalo who were ordained by Pope Paul VI at St. Peter's Basilica on May 17, 1970. Fr. Manuel Linterna was the last of the Filipinos ordained in Rome in 1974.



More Italian missionaries came to augment the community, notably Fr. Leonardo Zega who edited *Home Life* magazine; Fr. Luigi Zanoni who succeeded the Founder as Superior General and who later chose to stay in the Philippines; Fr. Pietro Campus who would become Superior General from 1998 to 2016; and Bro. Adriano Banfi who managed the printing press and would be the last Italian missionary to the country.

The continued increase in vocations and the acquisition of printing machines prompted the construction of a separate building for the printing press in 1967, aptly named *St. Joseph's House*. Also rising in Makati were a three-story residence for the professed members and the *Libreria San Pablo*.

GROWTH AND ORDINATIONS IN THE 70'S AND 80'S

After Fr. Manuel Linterna, candidates to the priesthood were no longer sent to Rome for their theological studies. They took up Theology at San Carlos Seminary in Guadalupe, Makati; Maryhill School of Theology and Loyola School of Theology in Quezon City; and Divine Word School of Theology in Tagaytay City.



In 1983, during the term of Fr. Felino Quitalig, the first Filipino major superior, the community that had been elevated to a Region acquired a lot in San Fernando, Pampanga, where the Novitiate House was built. The community also became the Mobile Diffusion sector that carried the Pauline products in nearby provinces in the Central Luzon area.

On March 7, 1987, the Province accepted the invitation of the Bishop of Macau and the recommendation of the General Government to have a presence in Macau, with the hope of setting foot in China. Frs. John Manalo and Edgar Pasporte, the pioneers, first stayed in Hong Kong for their language studies and later settled in Macau where they were joined by Fr. Albino Bento Pais, a Portuguese Pauline. Thus, the circumscription would become the Philippine-Macau Region. Unable to enter China, the missionaries continue to work under the Bishop of Macau.

The SSP Philippines-Macau Region became a Province with the appointment of Fr. Gil Alinsangan as Provincial Superior in 1990. In 1991, the SSP Province sold a part of the lot in Makati where the seminary building stood. The proceeds financed the transfer of St. Paul Seminary in Silang, Cavite, and the establishment of Pauline communities and diffusion centers in Cebu (May 29, 1991) and Cagayan de Oro (September 15, 1995).



The new St. Paul Seminary in Silang was blessed by the Superior General Fr. Silvio Pignotti on June 20, 1993. In Cebu, the SSP acquired a lot in Upon, Lapu-lapu City, and a complex was built. The Cagayan de Oro community was likewise established and served as the base of distribution in the northern Mindanao area.

Under Fr. Celso Godilano as Provincial Superior, the community of Iloilo was erected (August 20, 2000), becoming the center of apostolic activities in Western Visayas. Iloilo is the home province of many SSP members. On June 12, 2002, the Paulines set foot in southern Mindanao with the establishment of the community in Davao City.

FROM PRINTING TO PUBLISHING IN THE 90'S

Passing through the 90's, the Society of St. Paul underwent an important change of image – from Printer to Publisher. In 1991, the SSP General Government launched the use of the official trademark—St Pauls. It is the "corporate logo" used in all its circumscriptions all over the world. *Libreria San Pablo* became ST PAULS bookstore and *St. Paul Publications* became ST PAULS publishing.





For a long time, the Society of St. Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul have been using the same *stemma* or "trademark" that came from the Founder himself. But in 1991 the Society of St. Paul adopted a new logo as one single sign for all the activities of the Congregation, from books to audiovisuals. In two black lines, one descending and the other ascending, is depicted the salvific movement of the Word of God. The allusion to the transcendent Word of God is interpreted horizontally by the spiral which to a discerning eye appears like P, the first letter of "Paul," which is the key word of SSP institutional and apostolic identity. Moreover, the spiral expresses in its revolving style the fundamental prerogative of the Pauline mission, the universalism which characterizes the cosmic vocation of their apostolate.

The beginning of the 21st century ushered rapid changes in media culture with the advent of computers, cable TVs, and cellular phones. The demand for print media lessened drastically as the electronic media and information technology took the lead. St Pauls Philippines was organized as one apostolic entity and was tasked to consolidate all the phases of its operations, from the editorial, to production, to marketing, and to distribution/diffusion. The printing press in Makati was closed, and printing was outsourced to other printing plants in the country and abroad. More ST PAULS bookshops and outlets were added in the major cities in Metro Manila and other cities.

The SSP Philippine-Macau Province used to be known in the country through its printing services, books published under St Paul Publications, and two monthly magazines*: Home Life* for the family, and *The Youngster* for the youth. *Home Life's* section, *Dialogue with Father*, which was run by its long-time editor Fr. Andres Arboleda, Jr., was popular among readers. It ceased publication in 2006. *The Youngster,* subscribed mostly by Catholic schools, continues to this day.

The congregation would become more known through its Sunday missalette *Sambuhay* in both English and Filipino editions, started in 1987. On January 1, 2000, the Ilonggo version was added.

In line with the thrust of the 8th General Chapter (2004), St Pauls geared its apostolic projects towards the propagation of the Word of God, the Family, and Mass Media Culture. St Pauls obtained the rights to print and diffuse the Bibles in English (the *New American Bible*, the *Revised Standard Version*, and the *Pastoral Bible*) and, in tandem with the International Catholic Biblical Association in Rome, published the Bible in different Philippine languages: Pilipino, Ilonggo, Cebuano, Capampangan, and Binisaya of Samar-Leyte. Bible derivatives—*365 Days with the Lord*, *Simbahay* (Bible Diary in Tagalog), and *Pandasal* (Liturgical Prayers and Readings)—were started for study and meditation on the Word of God. These seasonal products are the mainstays of St Pauls.





STRAINING AHEAD

With younger members getting more inserted into its life and mission, the Philippine-Macau Province strains ahead to meet the challenges of the times. even if like the rest of the world, it is sorely tried by the pandemic COVID-19.

For the past decade, the Province has visibly inserted itself in the local Church through partnership with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the Archdiocese of Manila and other dioceses, and internationally with Vatican Radio (English). It had a media coverage of Pope Francis' visit to Tacloban City (January 17, 2015) and published the missalette for Pope Francis' Mass at the Luneta the following day. It also covered for the CBCP the International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu City (January 24-31, 2016).

In the biblical area, ST PAULS started the St. Paul National Bible Quiz (SPNBQ) in 2010 as part of the 75th anniversary celebration of the presence of SSP in the Philippines. The Bible Team would go to different regions of the country to organize the elimination round and the regional championship among high school students. The regional champions would then compete for the National Championship at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. On its 10th anniversary in 2019, SPNBQ drew 295 schools and 682 teams as participants. Due to the pandemic COVID-19, the SPNBQ has evolved into a weekly streamlined Bible challenge "Faith or Fake."

INTO THE WORLD OF THE DIGITAL

The pandemic COVID-19 has been a challenge to the creativity of the members to realign and produce more apostolic initiatives. *Sambuhay TV Mass* online has been addressing the needs of Filipino migrants and workers. It now regularly features Sunday and daily Masses for the homebound because of the corona virus. The same is done by *Sambuhay TV Mass sa Parokya*, livestreamed from the SSP Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Pasay City for its virtual parishioners and benefactors.

Other new or continuing digital initiatives are:

Sambuhay Interaktib, Aired every Monday and Wednesday. Online viewers receive inspiration and entertainment to help them through the Pandemic crisis and life challenges.

Dear Pablito, aired every Friday, 9 PM. Letter senders share their witness or experiences on how the Word of God has helped them grow.

Bless Me, Father, aired every Thursday. Practical spiritual pieces of advice are given by SSP priests to letter senders who share their problems.

Catholic Sync, a bi-monthly seminar serving as a supplement to *The Youngster* magazine. The topics of the webinar are in line with CEAP materials and K-12 curriculum.

Spotlight, an inspirational webinar where St Pauls authors and writers present their books.

Halo TV, a bi-monthly video on Bible stories for children, tied with *Halo* magazine.

Gabay Sambuhay, a liturgical catechesis video on the important seasons, feasts, solemnities, and celebrations of the liturgical year.

Sunset, Sunrise sa Parokya, an informal evening talk show on topics and issues, events and celebrations, Scriptures and Church teaching for virtual parishioners.

The Padscast is a weekly podscast hosted by two priests who share about finding meaning and joy in one's faith.









SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

St Paul Seminary in Silang, Cavite, is the formation house of the SSP aspirants. It accepts candidates who have finished their senior high school studies and professionals who wish to become religious and priests. Its present Dean of Studies is Fr. Norman Peña, Jr., who has doctorate degrees in Communication (Salesianum in Rome) and Education (St Paul University, Manila). Under his and the Rector's guidance, the seminary is turning into a school of communication, offering two choices for a college degree: *Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy or Bachelor of Arts in Communication.* Both degrees offer Philosophy courses that will qualify the graduate to take up Theology leading to the priesthood. Aside from the SSP seminarians, St Paul Seminary also accepts students from other seminaries and religious institutions as well as lay students.

Engaged in digital communication, at this time of pandemic the SSP aspirants in Silang regularly post Bible reflections in the seminary Facebook Page as part of their apostolate. They write short reflections based on a chosen verse from the Readings of the Day and provide accompanying social media graphics. Called *"S-Word: Scripture You Can Share,"* the online program gives them a venue to practice their writing and design skills. They have also ventured into webinars.

MISSION TO THE NATIONS

While vocations especially in Europe and the United States are getting scarce, the Philippines has been blessed with a good number of vocations and has been sending members to mission "*ad gentes*." There have been Filipino members assigned to Nigeria, Venezuela, England, and France. At present, Filipino Paulines — priests and young professed — are found in the United States, Australia, Macau, Spain, Brazil, and Italy (Rome and Milan). Fr. Celso Godilano has been a member of the General Council in Rome for two terms (12 years). Filipino Paulines are continually challenged to expand their horizons, for as the Founder Blessed Alberione emphasizes, "Your parish is the world."

THE CONSECRATED SECULAR INSTITUTES

The SSP Province has seen growth in the Consecrated Secular Institutes aggregated to it, especially the Institute of the Holy Family (ISF) and the Institute of Our Lady of the Annunciation (IMSA). It needs to solidify the Institute of St. Gabriel the Archangel (ISGA) and the Institute of Jesus (IGS). These institutes are consecrated persons who by their secular nature witness to the values of the Kingdom of God in the world, acting as "leaven" of the Gospel. The Province also has Pauline Family members belonging to the Association of Pauline Cooperators (APC), founded by Fr. James Alberione to assist his foundations and many initiatives.



TINIG LOYOLA NEWS ROOM



A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE ON TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE TEACHING

Leilani Lopez

On 23 June 2020, the faculty of Loyola School of Theology (LST) received an email from the VP for Academic Affairs, Fr. Rogel Abais, SJ. It was a memorandum on pre-training workshop for online teaching curiously signed by "Your LST Training Team." For me, that was an email loaded with big unfamiliar words and phrases: instructional design for online teaching, learning management system (LMS), and Canvas. Behind all the jargon, what registered in my mind was that we in the academe were in for a new learning experience in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. First, we had to learn Canvas, the preferred learning management system. Second, we had to apply theory to practice by creating Canvas programs for our courses and populate the same with the modules that would be used in this new pedagogy. Upon receipt of this email, I can assure you that I heard in my mind a distinctive collective sigh of panic mixed with excitement from us professors (if these two emotions can even possibly co-exist). The ending of the email which read, *"We hope exploring Canvas feels like an adventure that opens new possibilities for your teaching style,"* was not exactly reassuring for us non-digital natives despite its optimistic note.

As the academic school year 2020-2021 came closer to its opening, it became very clear that teaching and learning would now be described with these buzzwords: online, distance, remote, flexible, and blended. With Ateneo de Manila University's guidance, LST became one of the pioneers in introducing a completely online learning modality using both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities that have been designed to deliver the same learning outcomes as the physical face-to-face classes.

TECHNOLOGY FOR NON-TECHIES

From June to July, the LST faculty, who were now grouped into clusters, diligently attended the online workshops given by Fr. Francis Alvarez, SJ, and his team of tech buddies. We were given links, materials, and homework leading to the creation of our own courses in the Canvas system. On the side, the more curious (and anxious) of us even attended the Ateneo de Manila University's SALT Institute's slo-mo Canvas tutorials for professors (keyword: slo-mo). Our very own cluster composed of faculty and counselors from the RMT-Center for Family Ministries also Zoomed our way into sharing new tips, new apps, and creative ways of venturing into our virtual classrooms.

The most difficult part of transitioning to an online modality for us teachers was learning how to be more tech-savvy in a matter of a month or two before the academic school year commenced. I consider myself extremely lucky because my three young adult sons who are natural digital natives became my default tech buddies in our new work-from-home set-up. But how about most of my older colleagues whose major tech achievements are PowerPoint lectures they proudly made themselves? Sadly, I know of icon-professor-colleagues who had to give up teaching just because learning Canvas and all the new apps raised their blood pressures and challenged their mental health.



If learning to create modules through Canvas, and the accompanying accoutrement of self-produced video lectures, uploading apps for checking if the students read the assigned readings, and dabbling with apps that supposedly create visually stimulating millennial acceptable audio-visual aids were not torture enough, think about the incredibly unreliable and slow internet! Not to mention the Zoom sessions that get cut off after exactly one hour, unless one has a paid account! I am glad that LST stepped up and gave us some internet allowance to replace the cafeteria and transportation allowance of old.

I must admit that with this new teaching adaptation, I also fell prey to the "add-to-cart" online shopping frenzy for what could make me a cooler teacher in the virtual classroom: a diva-worthy ring light, decent webcam, tripod, laptop stand, microphone, earphones, ergonomically designed chair, and working desk. My workspace has become like a mini ABS-CBN studio – all for the love of teaching.

My biggest achievement so far: I now know how to record my video lectures on Prezi, convert and compress them to smaller files, upload them myself to my very own YouTube channel and embed/post the link to the Canvas module. Ha! But honestly, when I monitor viewership by students, I cannot but feel disappointed and discouraged considering the production effort I put into my video lectures. Yes, dear students, we can see how many of you viewed our videos in our Canvas teacher accounts.

CLASSROOM VIBE: FACE-TO-FACE VS. VIRTUAL

The thing about online teaching is that I miss the classroom. The lectures, recitations, bantering, and interactions done in a face-to-face class can never be approximated by a virtual synchronous class where everyone is in their tiny virtual rectangles onscreen. I feel robbed of the opportunity to get personal and know my students better. Since we were allowed to do only two synchronous sessions throughout the semester, I met my class of 42 students at full attendance twice only, officially. I held non-mandatory synchronous sessions weekly only to check on the students' welfare and mental health, and to clarify and answer questions related to modules which they should have accomplished asynchronously in their own space and time. Seeing my students like a seat plan on screen was not the best way to interact, but it gave us that very much-needed connection and interaction during the lockdown. We all had to adjust to lags on the internet, working with the mute, video on/off, reaction buttons, getting distracted by ever-present rooster or dog noises, and having some side interactions via the chatbox. In this virtual classroom, I must admit that I prefer seeing everyone on video even if they are texting or Facebooking on the side. It is those on video-off that disconcerts me more because I can never be sure if they are actually present in class. However, I just think to myself that they must have poor internet broadband and therefore have to conserve data by not showing themselves on video. Finally, I cannot help but miss the end-of-semester classroom self-care/cultural/international feast which is a must if it were a face-to-face class. For now, Zoom and Google Meet will have to be our virtual classrooms. They do not exactly have the LST classroom vibe, but in compliance with safety protocols, they will have to do for now.

ASSESSING WHAT AND HOW MUCH WAS LEARNED

As far as the goal of educating our students is concerned, this has been an experimental year. The faculty were given a template of connecting overall LST learning outcomes with our course-specific learning outcomes. We all had to redo, realign, and readjust our course syllabi and course outlines, making sure that students would still receive the knowledge, skills, and competencies that the course

offered. It was challenging for me because there was a counseling practicum component in the Pastoral Psychology and Counseling course which I taught. How would students do counseling practicum online?

The bigger challenge was how to integrate theory and practice in a modular set-up. I had to be very conscious about giving requirements that were appropriate, doable, and hopefully, enjoyable. Reflection papers were my non-negotiables, but other requirements became more pandemic-context-oriented, i.e., how theories learned in class translated to the students' growth, development, and maturing in the context of the pandemic. The counseling practicum which I worried about a lot in the beginning became a virtual success, thanks to the assistance of facilitators from RMT-Cefam who had already been eased into online counseling earlier during the lockdown.

Based on the end-of-semester course evaluation, the general complaint was that even with more lenient rules and simpler activities, the students felt overwhelmed and overburdened with so much on their plate during the semester. Despite this, the students expressed their gratitude for the course as it helped them become more aware of their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and meta-personal dynamics through theory, practice, and (virtual) class interactions. I must say that there have been a lot of cognitive and creative juices that flowed in this online teaching and learning process. More importantly, much commitment and compassion also shone through in the process.

What I recounted above as my experience as a teacher in this online modality of teaching is likewise generally mirrored in the experiences of my students based on their reflections and narratives about the whole process. They went through the same adjustments with technology as well as adaptations done with virtual classroom learning. In terms of what could be better, we share the same hope that soon, very soon we will meet each other face-to-face in the lobby, hallways, and classrooms of LST.



LST DEVOTES INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS ON POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL, *FRATELLI TUTTI*

Ed Colmenares, SJ

Loyola School of Theology greeted the New Year 2021 by launching its international study days on the *Fratelli Tutti*. The International Study Days on *Fratelli Tutti* lasted for nine Wednesdays, from January 6, 2021, to March 3, 2021. At 10:30 AM during these nine Wednesdays, the videos were released on LST's YouTube channel. The study showcased several faculty members and alumni from across the world who shared their thoughts and reflections on Pope Francis' third encyclical. The time and schedule were reminiscent of the pre-pandemic on-campus Theological Hour.

LST President Fr. Eric Eusebio, SJ, and Vice-President for Academic Affairs Fr. Rogel Abais, SJ, formally introduced the event with their welcome messages. They highlighted how this recent encyclical of Pope Francis inspires in us a vision of sisterhood, brotherhood, and social friendship, an oft-repeated theme that Pope Francis emphasizes in his speeches and writings.

During these international study days, the speakers did not just present the contents of the encyclical. They also shared their reflections based on their contexts within which they see the challenges and opportunities that *Fratelli Tutti* opens up, whether they are in the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Italy, Indonesia, Kenya, or India. It is with these reflections that the International Study Days aim to deepen the LST community's reading of *Fratelli Tutti*.

The speakers for the International Study Days were: Fr. Francis Xavier Nguyen Hai Tính, SJ (Vietnam), Fr. Manuel Montesclaros, SJ (Philippines), Fr. Phuong Dinh Toai, MI (Vietnam), Fr. Jojo Fung, SJ (Malaysia),Fr. Rowan Rebustillo (Philippines), Fr. Walter Diaz, CS (Argentina), Fr. Cesare Sposetti, SJ (Italy), Sr. Antonetta Pereira FMM (India), Fr. Wilbert Mireh, SJ (Myanmar), Fr. Martin Waweru Kamau, SJ (Kenya), Fr. Greg Soetomo, SJ (Indonesia), Fr. Jose Hildy Banaynal, SJ (Cambodia), and Dr. Maria Teresa Guingona-Africa (Philippines).

The videos of their talks may still be accessed on the YouTube channel of the Loyola School of Theology.



HOLY SEE GRANTS *NIHIL OBSTAT* TO SEVEN LST FACULTY MEMBERS

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

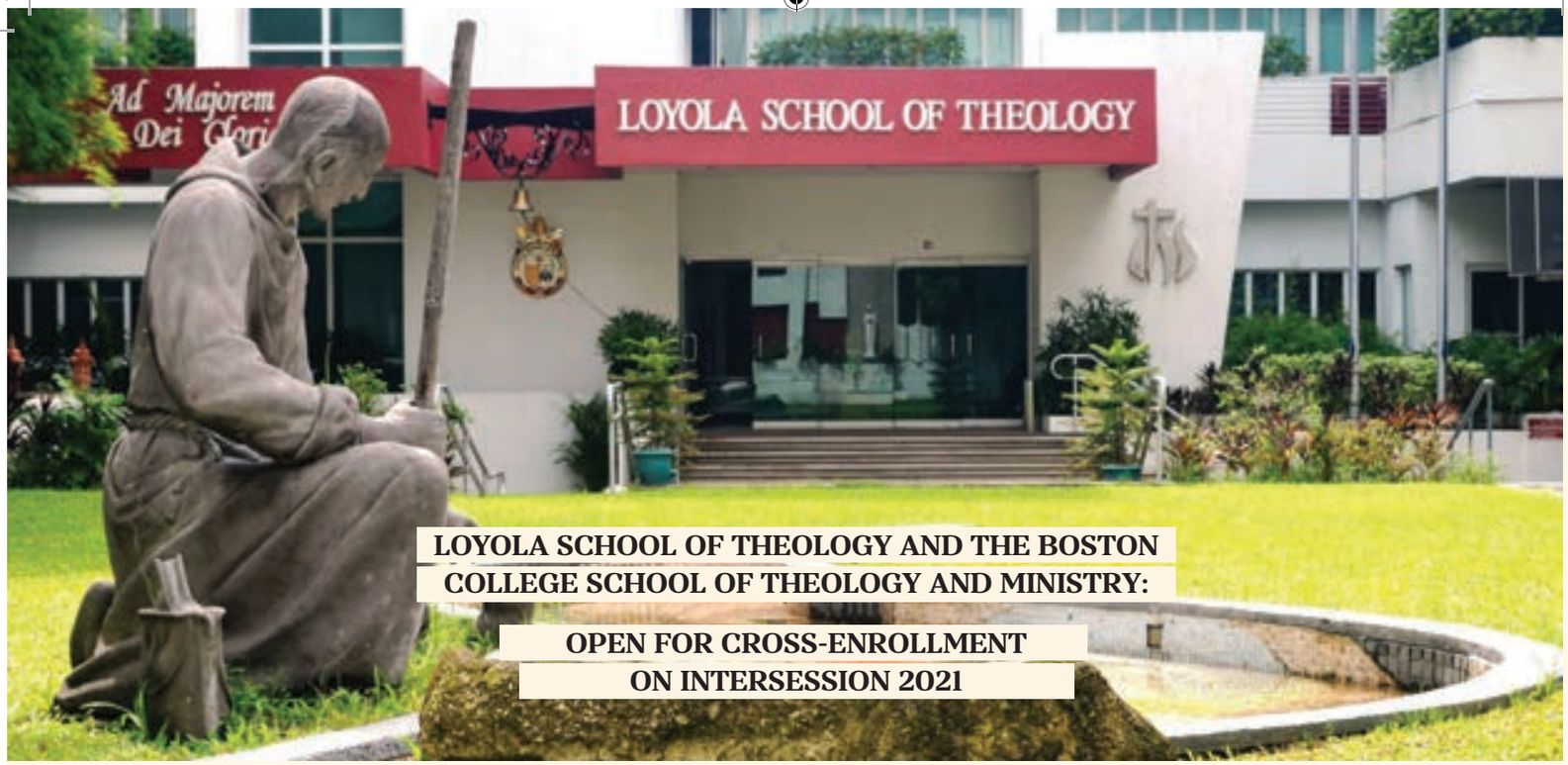
On March 4, 2021, LST President Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio Jr., SJ, announced to the LST Community and Friends that the Holy See has granted *Nihil Obstat* to seven LST Faculty members. The *nihil obstat* ("nothing hinders") is a declaration of no objection for these professors to teach. It is the Holy See's promotion of the LST Faculty to the ranks of Full Professor and Associate Professor, as contained in its rescript dated 17 December 2020 and 2 February 2021.

Full Professor:

Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, SJ, STD, Moral Theology

Associate Professors:
Fr. Francis D. Alvarez, SJ, STL, PhD, Biblical Theology
Fr. Abundio R. Babor, Jr., MSC, STD, Moral Theology
Fr. Hartono Budi, SJ, ThD, Systematic Theology
Sr. Maria Anicia B. Co, RVM, STD, PhD, Biblical Theology
Sr. Bernardita D. Dianzon, FSP, STD, PhD, Biblical Theology
Fr. Reginaldo M. Mananzan, SJ, JCD, Canon Law

Fr. Eusebio expressed his sincerest gratitude to His Eminence Most Rev. Giuseppe Cardinal Versaldi, DD, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, for his continued support of, and confidence in, Loyola School of Theology and its Faculty.



LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND THE BOSTON COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY:

OPEN FOR CROSS-ENROLLMENT ON INTERSESSION 2021

By virtue of a Memorandum of Understanding between Ateneo de Manila University and Boston College, Massachusetts, LST and Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (BC-STM) have come to a cross-enrollment agreement for their respective students upon the conclusion of a series of online meetings held on 9 and 23 February and 9 March 2021. LST was represented by President Fr. Enrico Eusebio SJ,Vice President for Academic Affairs Fr. Rogel Anecito Abais SJ, and Executive Secretary Fr. Eric Marcelo Genilo SJ; BC-STM counterparts were Dean Fr. Thomas Stegman SJ, Associate Dean Dr. Jennifer Bader, Associate Director of Supervised Ministry, Global & Community Engagement Marcia Ryan, Associate Dean for Finance & Administration Maura Colleary and Assistant Dean for Graduate Enrollment Management Anthony Russo.

This Intersession 2021, LST will offer both LST-hosted courses and BC-STM-hosted courses as follows:

LST-Hosted Courses

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

BPM 102/TMP 211.04 Introduction to the Old Testament | Fr. Felipe Fruto Ramirez SJ, STD | Schedule: MWF, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course introduces the students to Church teaching regarding Scripture in general and Biblical inspiration. It guides the students through the world of the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament which reflects the socio-political and religious history and ideals of ancient Israel. The following topics are treated: 1) the Bible and the Literature of the Ancient Near East; 2) the formation of the canon of the OT; 3) the books of the Torah; 4) the books of the Prophets; 5) the books of the Writings; 6) the overall message of the Old Testament and its relationship to the New. The course offers pedagogical tools in interpreting the Old Testament and in explaining and proclaiming the Sacred Scriptures to students and parishioners and to whomever the participants minister.

BPM 106/TMP 212.04 Introduction to the New Testament | Moses Catan, PhD | Schedule: TThS, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course introduces the student to diachronic and synchronic methodologies in interpreting the Bible. With this methodological background, the student is given the opportunity to read and study the texts of the New Testament and so gain a basic overview of their content and major themes and concerns.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

TMP 226.06/TMP 326.06 Engaging in Dialogue with Indigenous Cultures and Spirituality | Fr. Jojo Fung SJ, STL, PhD | Schedule: MWF, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course enables the students to be enriched by the religiocultural richness of the indigenous peoples in the use of the spiral process (10th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences FABC, 2012 Vietnam) of learning and doing theology. The spiral process begins with narratives of the students' experience of the beliefs and practices of the indigenous communities. Prayerful analysis of the students' narratives in the contexts of indigenous peoples

enable the students to formulate a more indigenous specific and sensitive theological framework that enables the students to discerningly theologize on the best impulses (GC 34, D. 4, no. 8) amidst the onslaughts of globalization that deterritorialize and dereligionize the indigenous cultures and spiritualities and how they resonate with the Christian faith.

This theological reflection will also reflect on the need for a postcolonial epistemic shift in the face of neocolonialism (e.g. settler colonialism) and neoextractivism. This theological reflection will lead to a pastoral response by which the students formulate a few pastoral strategies that inculturated the sacramental celebration of the rite of passage by incorporating the religiocultural beliefs and ritual practices. The use of this discerning hermeneutic enables the students to enable the students to respond to Missio Dei for a more integral and sustainable livelihood with joy, dignity, justice, peace and resilience amongst the indigenous communities.

MORAL THEOLOGY

TMP 202/TMP 302 Fundamental Moral Theology | Fr Eric Marcelo Genilo SJ, STD | Schedule: MWF, 9:00 am-12:00 nn

This course seeks to give a historical, practical, and pastoral approach to the study of fundamental moral theology. It presents the historical richness and diversity of the Church's moral tradition, seeking to provide the student with an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the resources of the tradition. By tracing the history of the development of the Church's moral teaching, the course seeks to relate the Church's ongoing moral discernment with the development of the Church's self-understanding as it journeys through human history. Through the use of cases, the course illustrates methods of moral analysis, the application of moral principles, the dynamics between magisterium and conscience, and pastoral approaches to difficult moral cases especially taking



into account the social and cultural realities in the Asian context.

BPM 103 Overview of Moral Theology | Fr. Abundio Babor, M.S.C., S.T.D. | Schedule: MWF, 2:00-5:00 pm

This is a synthetic course on Christian morality that offers an overview of fundamental morality, sexual ethics, bio-ethics and social justice. It presents the historical richness and diversity of the Church's moral tradition, seeking to provide the students with an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the sources of the moral tradition. Through the use of cases, the course will illustrate methods of moral analysis and the application of moral principles.

SPIRITUALITY

TMP 257.04/TMP 357.04 Developing in the Spiritual Life: The Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives of the Human Person | Dr. Carmen Valdes | Schedule: Tue-Thu Sat, 9:00 am to 12 nn

This course develops a critical theory of personal identity and its development which are informed by perspectives from psychology and Christian Spirituality. It aids the students in developing an understanding of the dynamics of human growth and development as distinct from, but complementary to, the dynamics of spiritual growth and development.



BC-Hosted Courses

LANGUAGE COURSES

TMP 295.31/TMP 395.31 Latin I (3 credits) | TMP 295.32/TMP 395.32 Latin II (3 credits) | Franklin T. Harkins, PhD | 8:45-11:45 am (8:45 pm Manila) Monday through Thursday June 14 - August 5, 2021

This elementary course in Latin presumes no prior study of the language. Basic principles of Latin phonology, morphology and syntax will be treated in classes and reinforced by regular homework exercises and their review in class. Emphasis will be placed on the vocabulary that is appropriate to the various theological disciplines. This course is highly intensive and requires significant weekly work and a fair measure of independent learning. Students will be expected to master the basic grammar and most common vocabulary.

TMP 295.11/TMP 395.11 Biblical Hebrew I (3 credits) TMP 295.12/TMP 395.12 Biblical Hebrew II (3 credits) | Angela Kim Harkins, PhD 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm (1:30 am Manila) | Monday through Thursday | June 14 to August 5, 2021

This course is an intensive introduction to the grammar and syntax of biblical Hebrew. While no prior knowledge of the language is presumed, students must memorize the biblical Hebrew consonantal alphabet prior to our first meeting. The goals of the course are (1) to learn the grammar of biblical Hebrew; (2) to be able to use classic reference tools for biblical Hebrew; (3) to read and translate pointed passages from the Hebrew Bible into clear idiomatic English.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

TMP 211.62/TMP 311.62 Wisdom Literature: Job and Suffering (3 credits) | Andrew Davis, PhD | 5:45 pm - 9:00 pm (5:45 am Manila) |Monday through Thursday | June 28 to July 15, 2021

This course examines how the Hebrew Bible addresses questions around human suffering. After surveying different biblical perspectives, we will immerse ourselves in the Book of Job, in which Job and his friends (and, ultimately, YHWH) consider the meaning of Job's suffering. While this course is primarily interested in the theologies of the Book of Job, we will also take into account the book's literary artistry, redaction history and historical context. By the end of this course I hope you will have a better understanding of this important book, which is as timeless, complex, and inexhaustible as the mystery it contemplates.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

TMP 341 Practical Theology: Theological Foundations in a Practical Perspective (3 credits) | For Licentate and Doctoral Students Only | O. Ernesto Valiente, PhD | 5:45 to 9:00 pm (5:45 am Manila) Monday through Friday June 28 to July 15, 2021

Taught from a pastoral perspective, this course offers an overview of contemporary Christian theology, introducing basic theological themes reflected in Co-Workers e.g. the cultural context in which we do theology, God, being human, Jesus, reign of God, Church. It considers theological methods and investigates the sources that contribute constructions of theological positions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TMP 281/TMP 381 Basics in the Renewal of Religious Education: Education in Faith: Foundations and Practice (3 credits) | Thomas H. Groome, PhD | 8:30am - 11:45am (8:30 pm Manila) | Monday through Thursday | June 28 to July 15, 2021

This course proposes theological, spiritual and pedagogical foundations for a participatory and empowering approach to faith-based education, pastoral ministry and service. Reflecting religious education as a mode of practical theology and concern for the spiritual foundations of Catholic education, the course invites participants to develop their own praxis of educating from and for faith. This is the purpose of the Church's educational work in the world. However, it is also a responsibility of every Christian person and of every function of ministry and faith-based service.

SPIRITUALITY

TMP 256/TMP 356 Ignatian Spirituality: An Introduction (3 credits)
Eileen Burke-Sullivan, PhD
Associate Professor at Creighton University, Nebraska
8:45 am - 11:45 am (8:45 pm Manila)
Monday through Thursday
July 19 to August 5, 2021

A study of the coherent theological vision and practical spiritual teachings of Ignatius of Loyola through his writings (e.g. Spiritual Exercises, Diary, and Testament). The course explores both the historical foundations for Ignatius's spiritual program and its subsequent interpretations by theologians and pastoral practitioners.

IN MEDIAS RES, GOD INCARNATES

LST ONLINE MASS CELEBRATION 2020
PRESIDED BY REV. FR. NILO E. TANALEGA, SJ

Bro. Francis Lajola, IHF

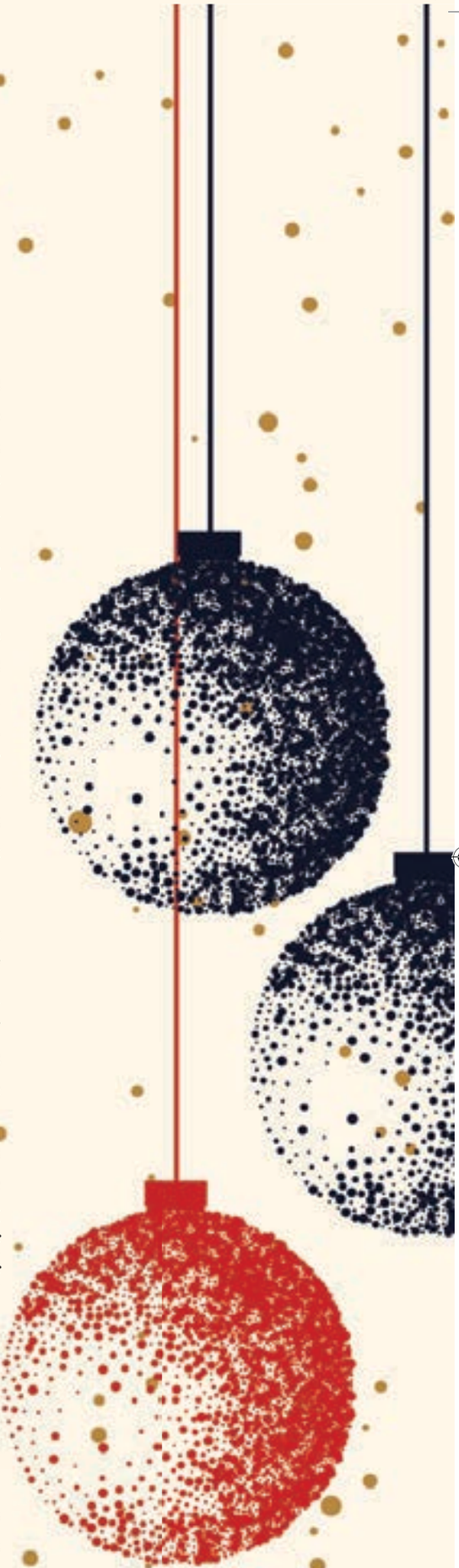
Christmas is the celebration of the coming of the source of the joy of the world, Jesus Christ, who illumines the world in the darkness of sin. It is a joyful celebration present in every country and culture, especially in our school, the Loyola School of Theology. Every year, the LST community gather to celebrate the Mass and have a simple dinner party, where talents of students, professors, and staff are showcased. Yet, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this on-site celebration turned impossible. Still, it did not hinder the joy of the coming of the Messiah *in medias res*. LST celebrated the season through an online Mass last December 22, 2020. The presider and homilist was **Fr. Nilo Tanalega, SJ**, an Associate Professor of Pastoral Counseling.

In his introductory remark, Fr. Nilo said to the LST community, "We join you in making do what is worth celebrating in this crucial year of ourselves and of the people we serve in our different ministries." Indeed, the pandemic has changed the course of our lives, making us adapt to the current needs of the faithful in order to let them feel the coming of the Christ-Child.

In media res, God incarnates. In the middle of things, of suffering, captivity, and poverty, God enters amid humanity filled with adversity. This is the core message of Fr. Nilo's homily. He began by pointing to the light that shines despite this pandemic. Though the pandemic changes the landscape of celebration and ministry, our efforts to reach the faithful spark some hope for people wanting a celebration. It is hard to celebrate when people are losing jobs and businesses, as well as health, and even lives. Yet, the Responsorial Psalm invites us, "Lift up your heads and see, your redemption is near at hand." In the spirit of Christmas, the Lord gives us the grace to face this pandemic with faith, hope, and love.

Fr. Nilo enumerated three aspects that bring forth "new meaning now for positive service in the vineyard of the Lord which may indeed cause a celebration." First is the opportunity in the *curam*, the care of the people. Fr. Nilo affirmed that though many of our ministers struggled in the face of online communication, "preachers did not become short in their delivery of the message and interpretation of the Word of God and in the *curam* and caring of the people." Indeed, people do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house (Mt 5:15).

Second, personal closeness and warmth are the standards of good ministry. In spite of the spatial-temporal challenges, there



exists a call for authentic ministry. Fr. Nilo pointed out: "Distance, seen before as negative non-engagement, is now transformed into an enhancement of survival. Thus, it has become a challenge for ministry from afar, from a distance. But that ministry from a distance has worked for us as an opportunity for ministry with dignity."

Third, and most important, crises are an opportunity to enter people's lives and loves. As the pandemic broadens and lengthens, it brings about severe loss, anxiety, and depression. This invites us to enter the sphere of the suffering person and to create an encounter with the Prince of Peace and Consolation. Fr. Nilo related it to the symbol of love par excellence, the Cross: "The horizontal beam crosses with the vertical beam. The horizontal beam of the suffering people crosses with the vertical beam of God's intervention for us." The birth of Christ is a far greater reality than the pandemic; it renews the course of the world when graces and blessings pour into our vulnerabilities.

At Christmas, God enters *in medias res* of humanity. Christmas is the celebration of God meeting with humanity. And because of the millions of viral infections and death, as well as the 4.5 million Filipinos who lost their jobs, there arises a challenge to be *in medias res* of humanity. This is crucial for if we respond negatively, Fr. Nilo said, people may doubt the presence of God. Maybe God is dead, some people may think. But he added, "Fortunately, we can also borrow something from the 70's, the resolution of this 'God is dead.'" How so? By saying that God is not dead if God is bread. Breaking bread becomes meaningful and valuable now... the bread of sharing with the unemployed, those who have lost their health, those who feel abandoned. It is sharing Jesus who is the Bread of Life, who satisfies our hunger and quenches our thirst.

Fr. Nilo ended his homily with a challenge to make the world feel the presence of the God of Love. Amid the pandemic, members of the LST community are called to be active missionary disciples *in medias res*, that people may feel the true spirit of Christmas.

Concelebrating in the online Mass were Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio, Jr., SJ, LST President; Fr. Rogel Anecito L. Abais, S.J., Vice-President for Academic Affairs; and Rev. Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, S.J., Executive Secretary. It ended with a carol of songs from the Jesuit theologians.



LST HOLDS GRADUATION EXERCISES 2021

Mamert Mañus, SJ

Loyola School of Theology's 22nd Baccalaureate Mass and Distribution of Diplomas was held on 26 May 2021, at 3 PM, at the Church of Gesù. It took the place of a traditional graduation ceremony due to the IATF guidelines in the ongoing pandemic. While last year's Baccalaureate Mass during the early days of the pandemic was done via Zoom and livestreamed on YouTube, this year's Mass was no longer livestreamed, as actual face-to-face gathering for

the Mass was already possible. Complying with the 10 percent seating restrictions, the event was attended by no more than a hundred individuals, more than half of whom were the graduates themselves. The rest of the participants comprised some superiors and formators of the graduates, the main Mass presider and the concelebrants, the choir, as well as the staff of LST and the Gesù. All the participants were seated with more than enough social distancing between each other.

In his introduction before the start of the Baccalaureate Mass, Fr. Enrico C. Eusebio, SJ, LST President, noted how this was a truly momentous year for everyone, especially for the graduates who had to complete their final year of academic formation in LST online, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also took the occasion to note how the priests, brothers, and seminarians of the Ministers of the Infirm (Camillians) were among the religious and clergy who bravely and in faith stood their ground in the face of COVID-19. Thus, in recognition of the service of the Ministers of the Infirm during this time of the pandemic, the main Presider and Homilist was Fr. Angel V. Crisostomo, MI, Master of the Temporarily Professed of the Camillians. Concelebrating with him were Fr. Eusebio, SJ, Fr. Eric Marcelo O. Genilo, SJ, and Fr. Renato R. Repole, SJ.

The Class Valedictorian, Fr. Cesare Sposetti, SJ, recorded a valedictory address from his hometown in Italy, and everyone listened to it in rapt attention. Fr. Sposetti recounted great memories of his four-year stay in the Philippines, especially pointing out how his theological studies were greatly grounded and enculturated in the Philippine and Asian context, as well as in the international milieu of LST, which has seen a significant rise in its international student population. He further expressed his deep gratitude for the four years of formation and companionship with everyone.

This year's official graduates totaled 89 and are comprised of the following: Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology: 54, Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL): 7, Doctorate in Sacred Theology: 4, Certificate in Basic Pastoral Ministry: 6, Certificate in Integral Ecology (CIE): 4, Certificate in the Pastoral Care of Migrants (PCM): 4, Certificate in Pre-Theology Studies: 8, Certificate in Theological Studies: 2.







HOMILY OF FR. ANGEL CRISOSTOMO, MI

Baccalaureate Mass, 26 May 2021

INTRODUCTION BEFORE THE BACCALAUREATE MASS

This has been a momentous year for all of us, but especially for our graduates who had to complete their final year of academic formation in LST online amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen misery around us, but we have also witnessed the heroism of our medical, economic, and religious frontliners as they served those in need. Among the religious and clergy who bravely—and in faith—stood their ground in the face of COVID-19 were the priests, brothers, and seminarians of the Camillians. In his Message on the 450th anniversary of the birth of St. Camillus de Lellis, Pope Francis said that the Camillians "have given their lives in service to victims of contagious diseases, confirming the truth that dedication to the point of heroism belongs to the prophetic nature of the consecrated life" (Vita consecrata, n. 83). How can we not see in this flourishing holiness a confirmation of the validity of the Camillian charism as a way to the perfection of charity? In recognition of the service of the Ministers of the Infirm during this time of the pandemic, we have invited the Master of the Temporarily Professed of the Camillians, **Fr. Angel V. Crisostomo, MI**, *to be our Presider and Homilist in this afternoon's Baccalaureate Mass.*

HOMILY OF FR. CRISOSTOMO

My heartfelt congratulations to the LST Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students! Today, I wish to leave with you, dear graduates, some thoughts on the gift of our priestly vocation gathered from our humble experience as Camillians in a time of pandemic. As Ministers of the Infirm, we maintain a history of being true to our Fourth Vow to serve the sick even in danger of our lives. We are to serve the poor sick, even if plague stricken, in whom we see Christ himself in



the person of the sick, with the heart of a tender mother taking good care of her only child who is ill—not for any personal gain, but voluntarily and for the love of God (from the Constitution of the Order promulgated by the Second General Chapter, 1599).

St. Philip Neri, whose memorial we celebrate today, became the Spiritual Director of our founder, St. Camillus de Lellis. St. Philip Neri initially discouraged St. Camillus from forming a group of laymen, known to him through "fake news" as a "glee-club" disturbing the hospital operations with their zeal for prayer and service to the sick. But God took it upon himself to furnish Father Philip with indisputable evidence of the necessity of Camillus' undertaking. One day, two of Camillus' Religious were assisting a dying person at the home of Cardinal Pallotto. Philip entered and the two respectfully stood aside to make way for him. But the saint protested saying: "Carry on, my sons, carry on with your good work. I can assure you I have seen angels themselves putting unto the lips of two other confreres of yours the words of comfort they were searching for to console the dying man they were assisting" (Mario Vanti, *St. Camillus de Lellis and His Ministers of the Sick*, 84-85).

In 1994, our Order began to celebrate every 25th of May (birthday of St. Camillus) as the feast day of the Camillian Martyrs of Charity who died serving the sick since the epidemics and plagues of 17th century Europe. In 1630, we lost 56 Camillians when a plague devastated northern and central Italy. Another plague in Italy in 1656-1657 led to the death of 86 Camillians, two of whom were Provincial Superiors and the Superior General then.

Now, during this Covid-19 pandemic, many of us are getting infected while serving the sick: in India, 10 got infected; in the Sicilian-Napolitan Province, 2; in the French Province, 2; in the Spanish Province, 3; in Kenya, 1; in Brazil, 9; and 13 in the Philippine Province. We have been losing confreres around the world. In the North Italian Province six got infected and three died. Six of our lay collaborators there also lost their lives. In the Polish Province, three got infected and one passed away.

We heard in the Gospel how Jesus called the Twelve to him and said to them, "Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:42-45).

Pope Francis, just a few months after he was elected Pope, addressing the Superiors General, had something to say on the value of service. He said, "We must never forget that true power, at any level, is service, whose bright summit is upon the Cross. May you always know how to exercise authority by accompanying, understanding, helping and loving. Let us keep our gaze fixed on the Cross: there is found any authority in the Church, where the One who is the Lord becomes a servant to the point of the total gift of himself" (*To the Participants of the Plenary Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General*, 8 May 2013).

St. Camillus used to call our response to a plague as a "festival of charity." Apparently, this time, aside from our pastoral care to the patients and personnel as chaplains in the hospitals, we became known through social media platforms while responding alongside the many members of the Church who have been offering a magnanimous response of charity since the beginning of this pandemic. With the grace of God, we were able to distribute relief goods consisting of food packs, hygiene kits, and PPEs for poor families and healthcare facilities in need. Some of us were also able to conduct medical missions and mental health interventions in some areas. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve as partners with many other religious, lay, non-Catholics, and organizations who are willing to serve. I must say we have not done much, but we simply did our duty.

Yes, we vowed to risk our lives for others. But we never promised to risk others' lives by

infecting people because we were potential carriers of the virus. We have managed to commit ourselves in serving the sick by first protecting ourselves in order to protect others. We have followed safety and health protocols. My Superior in the formation house supported our Scholastics in their decision to continue doing their apostolate, but NOT to commit suicide, for they can still serve with PPEs. I must admit with deep gratitude that not only our charity but also our faith and hope have sustained us especially when we became the sick person. In July last year, one of our Religious suffered severe symptoms and was rushed to the hospital. Sharing his story, he recalls his experience as a revelation. Experiencing all the typical symptoms of COVID-19, he had gone through the 10-day isolation with sadness and fear because of the uncertainties that the new coronavirus brought. Aside from not feeling well physically, another burden he faced was the feeling of being alone and the fear that he could be a spreader of this virus to others. Throughout his COVID-19 journey, his rosary was his constant companion. He realized that a truly deep sense of faith and hope are needed to survive any undertaking, that unwavering faith in the Lord that you can be healed, and that hope that you can surpass all those sufferings. There should be complete trust and surrender to the Lord.

It is worth remembering the children of Fatima. When I experienced having sore throat, muscle pains, and fever, I thought it was COVID-19. Thankfully, it was just the flu, and I recovered after taking some over-the-counter medicines. Nonetheless, I was scared; I felt paranoid. But the experience led me to good realizations about myself and my faith. I realized I was not ready to die. Not inside my bedroom.

I am a Camillian. I should die in the act of serving the sick. Not stuck in a bed. "Not here, Lord, not in this way" was my pleading. Until all of a sudden, I came to remember the children of Fatima—how they submitted themselves to God, and two of them were praising the Lord in their deathbed. They died at the height of the widespread Spanish Flu.

I remember also St. Therese of Liseux: how she praised the Lord in her deathbed. She died quietly from tuberculosis. I came to remember our Italian Scholastic, Nicola D'Onofrio, who also praised God on his deathbed. He died of cancer on June 12, 1964.

Thanks to my training in this School (I graduated here on March 9, 2005), I have developed a good sense of discernment. And so, remembering these young ones, I was able to confront my pride and I humbly begged in prayer, "If man lives by God's Word, so should I die by God's Word, whenever and wherever and however the Lord may be praised."

You see, when the situation seems so disheartening for us, we just go back to the Cross. No wonder St. Camillus made sure to attach



the Cross on our chests and be identified as Camillians. The Cross reminds us of the merciful love of Christ Crucified who strengthens our weak faith, restores to us his peace, and eventually encourages us to serve again. While in a state of prayer, the Crucified Christ told St. Camillus, "Fear not, Camillus. This is not your work but mine." Those were the words St. Camillus heard when he thought of quitting his ministry because he could no longer bear the ill will and opposition of envious authorities in the hospital. He was measuring up his failure against the limited work he could ever do. Only to make him realize in prayer that his calling was just to gaze upon the Cross. With that he regained his commitment to serve. And so, I am telling you, take the risk! Do you have to delay your ordination? Is not this time the right time to be a priest? Be Christ, the Good Shepherd and Servant, to his Church. When I asked one of our Religious assigned as a parish priest how to be a priest in a time of pandemic, he quickly replied with reflections from his experience.

> First, never go away from God.
> Second, look back at who you are,
> your identity as a priest.
> Third, be open to different changes
> in the situation.
> And fourth, never get discouraged
> but keep moving on, knowing that
> you are doing God's work.

After so many things that have just happened and have been done, you will go back again to God saying: "*Pasensiya na po, 'yun lang ang nagawa ko.* I am sorry, that was all that I could do." It was enough that you have served.

May the intercession of the Blessed Mother, Our Lady Health of the Sick, be upon you. Trusting in the Lord's promise of eternal life, we remember in this Eucharist the passing of our LST professors due to COVID-19: Fr. Timoteo Ofrasio, SJ; Sr. Mirasol Navidad, RSCJ; and Msgr. Sabino Vengco, Jr. We also pray for our student, Fr. Didik Bagiyowinadi of the Diocese of Malang, Indonesia.

Ad majorem Dei gloriam. May the glory of God be seen in the best of care we serve. Amen.



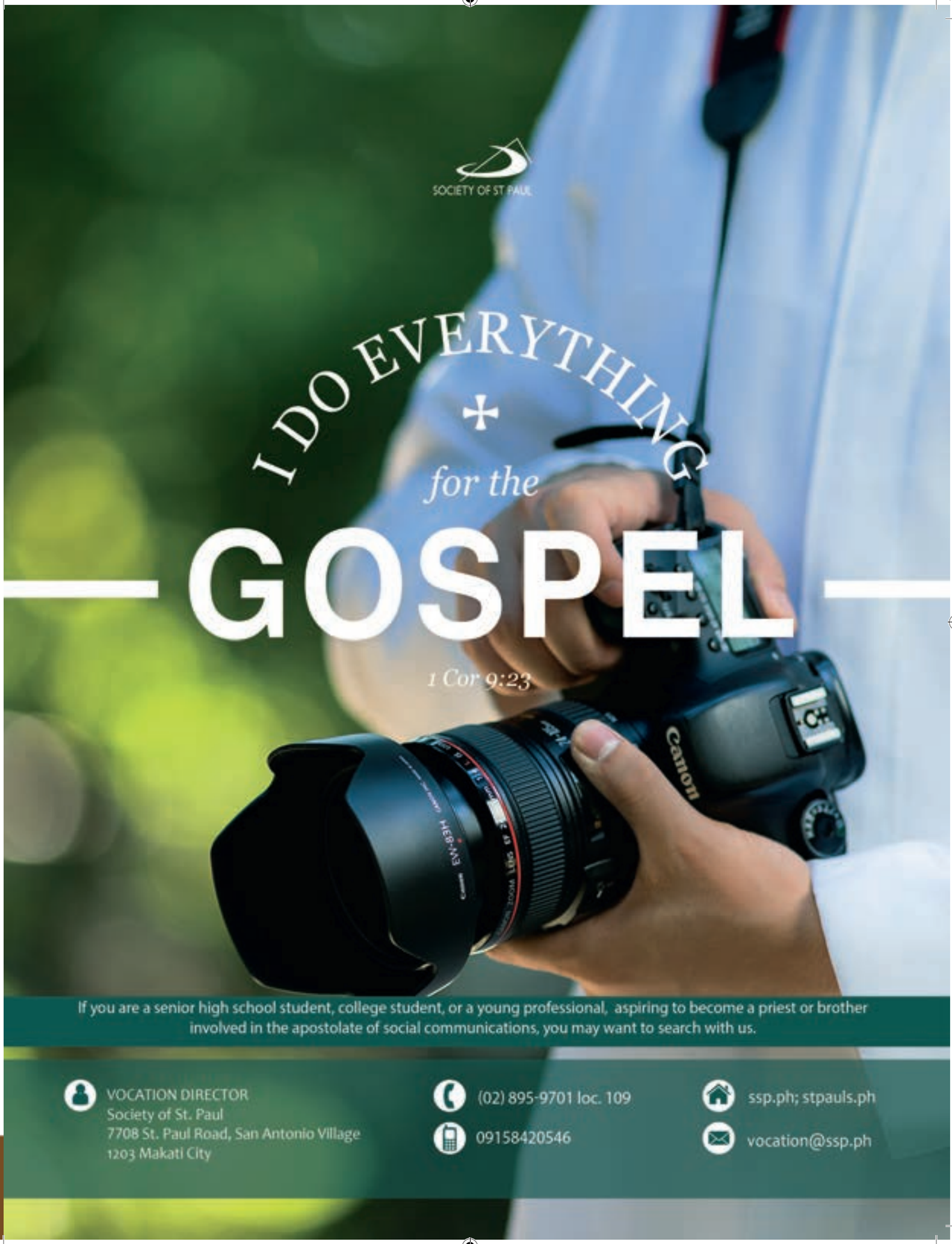
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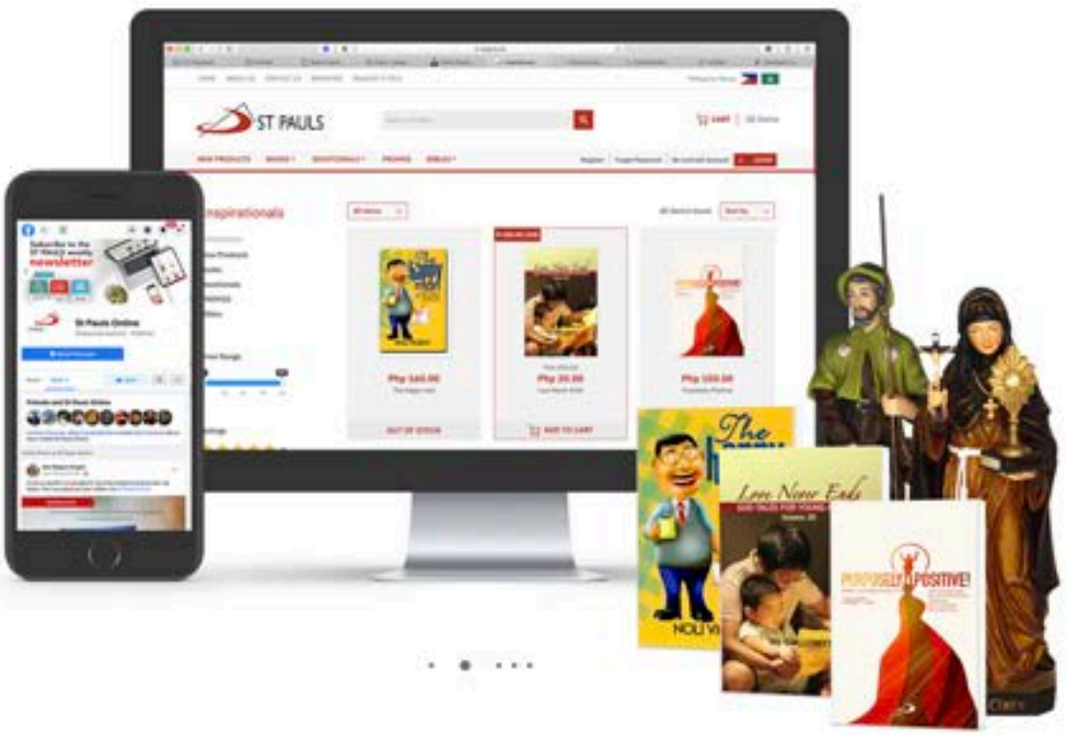
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